

Several Weighty
CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly Recommended

To the Serious Perusal of ALL, but more especially

To the

Roman Catholicks
OF
ENGLAND.

To which is prefix'd

An Epistle from one who was lately of that
Communion, to Dr. *Stillingfleet*, Dean of *St Pauls* ;
Declaring the Occasion of the following Discourse.

He is not joynd to the Church, who is departed from the Gospel.

S. Cypr. de Lapsis.

Am I therefore become your Enemy because I tell you the Truth ?
Galat. 4. 16.

Yet—I will very gladly spend and be spent for you : though the more
abundantly I love you, the less I be loved, 2 Cor. 12. 15.

L O N D O N,

Printed for, and to be sold by *John Holford*, in the *Pall-Mall*,
over against *St. Albans-street* ; and *John Harding*, at the
Bible and Anchor in *St. Pauls Church-yard*. 1679.

CONSIDERATIONS

[illegible]

Mart. 12. 1679.

IMPRIMATUR,

*Guil. Sill, R.P. D. Henr. Episc.
Lond. à Sacris Dom.*

An Epistle from one who was lately of that

101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-109



TO THE
Right Reverend and Honourable
H E N R Y
L O R D
B I S H O P of L O N D O N,

Dean of His Majesties Chapel, and one of his most
Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

I Have some Years since met with a Prophecy (and many talk of such things at this Time) which may yield a little Comfort in this Day of our Visitation. The Original it self I have not seen: but it is taken out of *Telephorus de Tribulat.* and thus cited by Dr. *John White: Antichristus non poterit subjugare Venetias, nec Parisios, nec Civitatem Regalem Angliæ.*

The Memorable Baffle that the *Venetians* gave to *Paul* the Fifth; the frequent Picqueering of the *Sorbon* with the same See, may in part *Justifie*: But the Wonderful Preservation, both Antient and Modern, of this Kingdom and *Metropolis*, from the Restless At-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

tempts of many of that Faction, will, I hope, Evince its *Probability*.

How Instrumental your Lordship hath been towards that Security and Happiness we yet Enjoy, how Indefatigable your Pains, how Undaunted your Courage in the most Critical Conjunctures, is with Gratitude and Applause proclaimed to the World, not only by your own Large and Numerous Flock, but by the Loud Acclamations of the Whole Nation. And though I never was so fortunate as to be an Eye-witness of those Heroick Vertues which daily Influence Your Charge, rendring You so Amiable to the Churches Friends, and at the same time so Formidable to her Enemies: yet that Universal Character which is every where given of You, engages me to look on you as no less than a Person in whom Concentre those Requisites, which some Criticks in Morality (now justly I dispute not) have exacted to make up a Compleat Christian. They are these: *The Orthodox Faith and Loyalty of a true English Protestant; the Zeal and Good Works of a Roman-Catholick; the Gracious Words and Painful Preaching of a Puritan.* And all these Inculcated by your Life, as well as Injunctions on your most Learned and Religious Clergy.

But I must remember my self at the *Judges Barr*, and not at the *Heralds Office*; and that this Paper attends You as a *Petition*, and not as a *Panegyrick*. Your most Gracious Approbation of my Desires (intimated to you by the Reverend Dean of *St. Pauls*) Invites
the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

the one, as Your undoubted Worth and Honour Ex-
orts the other.

Vouchsafe then, my Lord, to Accept into the Arms
of your Noble Charity what is penn'd purely with
a Spirit of Charity. They are such Reflexions as
Reclaimed my self, and may, with Gods blessing, con-
tribute to the Reducing of some others, as unwarily
mis-led as I was.

To which purpose, I endeavour Brevity and Per-
spicuity : designing this Discourse for the Vulgar,
(the Learned have richer Mines to recurr to) and
therefore waving that Accurateness of Method and
Expression, which Your Lordships Judicious Eye may
expect; but neither my Intent, the present Affliction
I lye under, the unsettledness of my Affairs, nor Ab-
sence from my Books (all which afford not that *Tran-*
quillum Scribentis & otia) will admit.

However, when all *Athens* was Busie and in Mo-
tion, the *Cynick* for Company would needs rowl a-
bout his Tub. And, if so obscure a Person as my
self, intrude into the Crowd of those Many Able
Contenders for the Faith once delivered to the Saints,
which daily almost appear upon the Stage; I have
St. *Augustines* Advice for my Apology. *De Trinit. l. 3.*
c. 3. In places infected with Heresie, all men should
write, that have any faculty therein, though it were the
same thing in other words : that all sorts of People,
among many Books, might light upon some; and the Ene-
my in all places might find one or other to encounter him.

Pe-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Besides, I thought this the best Expedient, Publickly to testify my Sincere Re-union to that Church in which I received my Baptism and Education; and how faithfully I am, and resolve by Gods Grace to continue,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most Humble

and Obedient Servant

T. S.

AN

AN EPISTLE

From a Late

Roman Catholick

To the Very Reverend

Dr. EDWARD STILLINGFLEET

Dean of St. Pauls, &c.

Very Reverend and Honoured Sir,

Though I am not altogether Ignorant of your Person, yet my chief Acquaintance is with those Learned Works of Yours, (the best Representative) wherewith you have enriched this Age, obliged the Church of England, and (I speak it experimentally) given the greatest Satisfaction to ingenious Minds, that sober and unaffected Reason (I do not mean such stuff as Mr. White's and Mr. Sergeant's Demonstrations) can possibly perform.

And thus, Sir, I have been your most intimate Friend and Servant these seven or eight years.

All which space I have been a very attentive Spectator of your famous Encounters, and to my Comfort seen single Truth and modest Reason combat with whole Troops of Old, Subtile, Confident, Cholerick, and I may add, Malicious Adversaries. And I hope I shall have Cause to bless God to all Eternity, and thank you for so Glorious a Sight. But before I return my full Acknowledgments to you, I must crave Leave to give you a Short but True Narrative: only be pleased not to believe it (as you stile Mr. Cressley's) a Legend of my self.

I had my Education in one of the chiefest Free-Schools in London, under the Care of a very able Instructor, and by him was fitted for the University. But about a year before my advancing thither, it happen'd that an ancient Gentleman came frequently to divert himself in a Walk that was near the School, and so took Occasion to discourse with divers of the Lads: I being the Head of the School at that time, he pretended a particular Complacency (though I know not why) in my self. He never conferr'd about any Point in Religion, but still entertained me with speaking Latin, which he did very fluently and politely: and his constant Discourse was about the rare Method of Education used beyond Sea, the great Number of their Students, the Diligence of their Tutors, the Exactness of their Disci-

Discipline, and much more to the like Effect. What this Conversation would have produced at last, I know not. But the chief Master of the School perceiving me often with him, at last forbade me his Company, and told me he sorely suspected the Gentleman to be a Jesuit. And I remember he instanced in some particular sly wayes those Persons used to Intice and Spirit away Youths, whom they judged fit for their Employment.

So this Correspondence broke off, and I never had more to do with him. However I must confess that much of his Discourse did recoil upon my Childish Fancy a long time after. And though within a short while I went to Cambridge, viz. in the year 1658. yet my mind was not quiet: and those stupendous Distractions both of Church and State that immediately followed, did infinitely add to my Perplexity.

Then happen'd his Majesty's happy Restauration: which being as it were a year of Jubilee, no wonder if the younger sort of the University did take the Benefit of the Indulgence: I mean Indulgere Genio, and use some Liberties, which at other times the strictness of an Academical Life would not have permitted. Here likewise I acknowledge I swam with the Stream, and did not so seriously mind those Affairs I was design'd for by my Friends, and so fell into those Inconveniences, which, not long after my having proceeded Batchelor of Art, induced me to leave the University.

Coming up to London I light into the Company of an ancient Acquaintance, and among other Discourses we at last fell upon Religion. The Gentleman assured me by no small Considerations to advise well what I fix'd upon, and likewise to recur to some able Person of her Perswasion, which was that of the Roman-Catholics.

Hereupon I was introduced to one of the most Grave, Subtle, and Acute Fathers then in the Nation (one whose Works I perceive you are not wholly a Stranger to.) I mean F. Fran. à S. Clara: with whose winning discourse I was extremely taken, and to whose extraordinary Cautilities I must always account my self extraordinarily obliged.

You cannot be long in Suspense concerning the Issue of this Interview. He who had triumphed over so many Persons of Honour and Quality, Clergy and Laity, (witness among the rest, Dr. G. Bishop of Gloucester) might easily baffle such a young Strippling as my self, and soon dazzle my Eyes with the glittering Pretenses of Infallibility, Antiquity, Unity, Universality, Succession, Councils, Fathers, Saints, Miracles, Religious Orders, &c. These, with the Example of several learned men, Converts of our own Nation, as Dr. Bailly, Vane, Carrier, Cressley, Wallingham, Montague, Crashaw, with many others yet living and therefore nameless, were, I then thought, too great a Cloud of Witnesses for my single Wit either to oppose or so much as question.

And now, Sir, you may easily guess what became of me. For about nine or ten years I was wholly immured up, forced to comply with and swallow every thing; durst not propose any Scruples for fear of being suspected Heretically inclined,

med. And thus I continued till the latter end of the year 1671. At which time, by Gods great Mercy I got some respite to reflect upon what I had done in revolting from the Church of England, and engaging with one, the ignorance of whose Proselytes is often made Use of for something more than bare Devotion.

Since that Time, I take God to witness, I have most impartially survey'd all the several Writers I could procure on both sides; but especially your own Books, Dr. Tillotson's, and Dr. Lloyd's. (To both whom, I beseech you, in my name to tender my most humble Thanks for that Great Satisfaction I have reaped by their Writings, especially The Rule of Faith.) And, I assure you, I found the Infallible Principles so shaken by those Solid and Learned Treatises, and my self so intrigued by my own Experience of the Juggling Practices of some Persons most cryed up for Perfection, that neither Father Bellarmine (for as you well observe, amidst that great boast that is made of Fathers, He is the Great Father with most of our Neoterick Controversists) nor Dr. T. G. nor Mr. Gressley, nor Mr. Serjeant himself, who speaks nothing but Scientifical Oracles, could Unblunder my thoughts: (that I may not wholly forsake the Rhetorick of my old Friends.)

And this hath been the true state of my Soul for several years, just like S. James's *ἄνθρωπος ἀσχυρὸς*, unconstant in his ways. For, what with the Terror of that Theological Scare-crow, Schism, on the one hand; with the Flattery of an acknowledged possibility of Salvation in the Roman Church on the other (though the Dean of Canterbury's Sermon on that Subject hath now perfectly cleared me) I was still detained in a Communion with that Church, which I conceived to hold all the Fundamentals of Christianity. To which (to acknowledge something of Humane frailty) I may add the Advantages I enjoyed, and the Damages I should unavoidably incur, by quitting a Party, whose Inveeterate and Implacable Malice towards a Defserter, though upon the strongest Convictions of Conscience, is sufficiently known, and particularly taken notice of by the afore-mentioned Reverend and Learned Author, in his Discourse on that of the Gospel, There is joy in Heaven over one Sinner, &c. and I my self have already begun to experience from some, from whom I neither expected nor deserved it. To omit that Innate Reluctancy, well nigh in All, of Recanting a Committed Error. Though these were but Difficulties of the Second Rate.

Yet at last those Desperate Practices whereof many of that Party stand suspected, and some indicted, made me resolve to break through all Obstacles, and publicly declare my Detestation of their Actions, by Renouncing their Communion, and Protesting against those Principles and Doctrines (as is evident in the most General Council of Lateran, and others, seconded by the undeniable Practice of many Popes, in Actual Deposing of Princes, and Disposling of Kingdoms) which, it is to be feared, had but too much Influence on such Traiterous Designs.

This Tenent of a Foreign Power, either Direct in Spirituals, or Indirect in Temporals, is most manifestly inconsistent with the Peace and Safety of our English Nation; and till it be Renounced or Disabled, we shall never be free from Jealousies and Fears.

There is another Point of as Fatal Consequence to Common Conversation, as the former to the Publick Government, and that is the Trick of Equivocation, or Refined Art of Lying. I will not say it is a Doctrine of the Roman Church; but I know it to be both the Doctrine and Practice of a Leading Party in that Church; and never, as I ever yet heard of, was it yet Censured by the Church it self; no more than the Deposing Doctrine, and other such like Hellish Maxims have been disowned.

Of this Latter I had a famous Instance not long since: A known Jesuit being apprehended in a Neighbouring Town, upon the Interrogatories put to him by the Magistrate, he denied himself to be a Priest, protested he was a Married man, had Wife and Children. And all this was salved by that pittiful Evasion (you know the shift of the Crucifix in the Sleeve used at China) That his Breviary was his Wife, and his Penitents his Spiritual Children. This was a very great Scandal to all that heard of it, both Protestants and Romanists; and for my own part, I was so Concerned in it, that I writ expressly to my old Learned Friend F. Fran. à S. Clara, to be satisfied. Who, quite contrary to my Expectation (and which hath much diminished the Esteem I had for him) gave me this Answer in Writing; That he had done nothing amiss, nor misbecoming an Honest man. Nay then, I thought I, the Good Lord open our Eyes! And, to deal plainly with you, from that very Moment I have been very much unsatisfied, whether the Roman Principles be safe to Dye in: much less to Ruin Estates, and Dye for.

Thus, Sir, being very timorous of diverting your many Weighty Employments, I have given you a Clear, Faithful, and Succinct Account of myself. And so now, *Lagetus contritus est, &c.* The Snare is broken, and we are escaped. My remaining Business is, as speedily as I can procure it, to be received into the Bosome of my antient Mother the Church of England, whom with unfeigned Contrition of heart, I acknowledge to have forsaken before I thoroughly understood; and purpose, by Gods help, to Evidence to the World, that I have far more Considerable Motives to return, than I had to Wander. And though I shall not make such a noise as Those who have Published Exomologeses, Challenges, &c. yet I hope I shall make it appear, that the Change I now make is done upon the maturest Deliberation, back'd by the most earnest Imploring of the Divine Assistance.

About five years since, it was my hap, at the Instance of a Person of Quality who had Considerable Sums to Dispose of, to publish a Small Tract entituled, The Case of Interest, or Usury, as to the Common Practice, examined in a Letter to the same Person. It is the onely Piece I ever yet penn'd: and I mention it, that if you please you may perceive, that I alwayes proceeded upon Principles of Honesty, Conscience, and Moderation; and even then had an Honourable Regard for the Church of England. But, Good Lord! what Outcries were then made against it by the Jesuitical Party, who look'd on it as purposely written to affront their Trade! what Excommunications threaten'd by others! So you may easily foresee what I am to expect, when I disengage my self of the Promise I just now made

made you. But a Good God, a Good Cause, and a Good Conscience, will, I question not, carry me through all.

It is no small Comfort to me, when I think how that Vast Wit, Mr. Chillingworth, could not escape those very Shares that I have been entangled with. And I presume it may serve as an Apology for the Slips and Failings of my Weak Intellectuals, when such a Great Master of Reason as He, was for a time led Captive. Yet at last, he most happily Discov'ed and Proved The Protestant Religion a Safe way to Salvation.

Those whom I forsake have a Tradition (as indeed they have too many) That none ever Retire from their Communion, but they presently become depraved in their Morals. (If they mean the Jesuits Morals, it is no great Matter) I have no wayes to Confute them fully, but as Diogenes did Zeno, by Walking : viz. with a Conscience void of Offence both towards God and Man. And if they shall, after their Charitable Method, think to bespatter me for any thing past ; I have such Publick, Authentick and Late Testimonies under Hand and Seal from the Chief among them, of my Comportment (though I will not disown the Allayes of Common Frailties and Imperfections) that shall be able to Silence the most Impudent Calumny.

But I fear I have already trespassed upon your Patience ; and I must refer what else I had to propose, till such time I am so happy (and truly till then, I shall neither be happy nor satisfied) as to see you. Many Doubts I have to Object, fitter to be committed to a Ghostly Father's Ear, than to Paper : and many Particulars there are, wherein I may perhaps gratifie your own Curiosity. But, having been so long a Romanist, and being still a Repented one, I should be loath that Disobedience to Royal Proclamations (however they have been slighted by some) should be the first fruits of my Conversion. And therefore I must patiently attend that good hour, when I may satisfie both my Obedience and my Inclinations together.

In your Conference with Sir P. T. and Mr. Coleman (that Wretched man, who, had he meddled with nothing but what he then pretended himself so desirous to be resolved in, had never come to that sad Catastrophe) you express so much Candour, Meekness, Christian Zeal and Charity for Satisfying those Differences, who in reality did nothing but shuffle with you ; that it emboldens me to Address a Request to you (besides my Thanks, which most Cordially I do by these Presents) viz. That because I apprehend Danger from some of these I relinquish, having already tasted a little of their kindness that way, and because I would not long remain in an Unfix'd & Neutral posture ; you would be pleas'd to procure leave that I might come up to London, where I may attend you, and both Give and Receive all desired Satisfaction possible. I know you so Eminent, that you may procure a License. This would Complete my Felicity : and as for your own Reward, besides the Complacency you take in the very Performance of such Charitable Offices, I can but refer you to that of St. James, cap. &c. v. ult. Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one Convert him : Let him know, that

he who converteth a Sinner from the Error of his wayes, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a multitude of Sins.

There is one *Cavil* I must needs remove, and it is this: *How chances this Change just now? why in this present Conjuncture? It is to be suspected you act more out of Fear than Conscience.* This *Surreptitious* I insinuated before, and partly adverted to it. But more particularly I have these things to offer in Reply:

I might, *ad hominem*, put the Objectors in Mind how Dr. Vane, Mr. Cressley, and others forsook the Church of England, when it was in a very low, persecuted Condition: and were not ashamed in their Writings to intimate as much. For one of the Motives of their withdrawing was, that She never had been well grounded; and therefore God seemed to forsake her, and Lopt off her Head: with much more to the same Purpose; as is particularly to be seen in Dr. Bailey's End to Controversie. But I scorn such Disingenuous, Mean-spirited Principles. And I desire that they would withal consider that the Church of England was then reduced to those Exigences for her constant and never blemished Loyalty. Whereas divers of themselves now stand charged with something else besides Idolatry and Phana-ticism.

But to answer for once and all; I confess I do it out of Fear; not of any temporal Incommodity; for that might several other wayes be avoided: but of having Fellowship with any of those horrid Works of Darkness, whereof many of its Professors, and the Religion it self are accused. And this may serve for my old Friends.

Now as for your self and all other candid disinterested Persons, I know it will be satisfactory to put you in mind, that to impute my Proceedings to the frowning of the Times on that Party, is *Fallacia non Causa pro Causa*: a Mistake of the Adjunct or Circumstance of Time, for the Principal Motive. The Conversion of a Sinner is the Work of Omnipotence; whosoever is most free in all his Actions *ad Extra*; so especially in the reclaiming of a strayed Sheep. He is no wayes tied up to the Circumstances of Whom, How, Where or When. *Nescit tarda Molimina Spiritus Sancti Gratia*, says S. Bernard. And if he were graciously pleased more effectually to touch my Heart now, than at any other time (and times of Affliction are his especial Seasons. *Afflictio dat Intellectum. Cum Occideret eos &c.*) I know no other Account can be given of it than that of our B. Saviour, Even so Father, for so it seemed Good in thy Sight. Nay I have before demonstrated that these Thoughts have been long hovering in my Mind, though perhaps they had not been altogether so suddenly declared, but out of a deep Resentment of the Danger of any further neglecting the Divine Call: and a seasonable Desire to Testifie to the World my perfect Abhorrence of such desperate Practices and Principles; which I am convinced are pernicious both to Publick Polity and Civil Society. And I hope none can reasonably be angry, that I have gained more Experience now I am thirty six years old, than I had when I was but twenty.

These are the Principal Matters I thought worth your Knowledge at present, wherein I protest before God and Man, that I have no other Design but the Quiet of my Conscience, and the Salvation of my Soul. And when I have given a publick

lick Tolerable Account of this Affair, I will take my leave of this Noble Science of Controversie (as Mr. Serjeant calls it) having alwayes been more addicted to Ascetick Theology; and sit down with Divine Anselm's Resolution, Quid restat per Totam Vitam meam, nisi ut Dedicam Totam Vitam meam? Crosses and Afflictions are no more than I expect. and deserve, having hitherto been so little acquainted with them. The Wise man bath read my Doom to me, Fili, accedens ad servitutein Dei, prepara Animum tuum ad Tentationem.

As for the sincerity of my Resolutions, I can but Appeal to that Great Searcher of Hearts and Tryer of Reins. And though some Folk talk of Dispensations from Rome for the taking All Oaths, and Complying with All Externals: and no meaner a Person than the Author of the Difference between the Church and Court of Rome, out of Arch-Bishop Spotswood's History, mentions some such like thing practised in Scotland: yet, with submission to the Learned Author, I conceive there is no such matter: since the Pope himself could never be induced to Approve even the single Oath of Allegiance; but expressly condemned it, and severely prohibited the taking of it, as containing, saith he, divers Points contrary to Salvation. And moreover, put case any thing of that nature were in Being; I here solemnly Avow, that I disown all such Pretended Authority.

One Circumstance, not very Material I confess (but I would not too much swerve from the Accurate Exactness of Writers of Epistles Apologetical: though Mr. Cressley observe it in the Beginning, and I in the Conclusion) must not be forgotten; and thus it is: To you above all Persons living, I have an Obligation to recurr in Spiritual Concerns; for I am your Parishioner: Holborn having been the place of my Nativitiy. I have nothing more, but with all Respect and Gratitude to assure you I am

Reverend and Honour'd Sir,

December 15.

1678.

Your most obliged

and Humble Servant

T. S.

Several

Several Weighty

CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly Recommended

To the Serious Perusal of ALL : especially the *Roman*
Catholicks of England.

IT is a very good Rule prescribed by some Spiritual Writers, *That in Converse, we should rather discourse of Things, than Persons.* And I intend, as much as the Matter will permit, to observe it in this subsequent Treatise; carefully avoiding all personal Reflections, especially upon such as are living; and shall only bring some Doctrines and Practices to the Test, which, though they pass for currant with many, will yet be found adulterate and contrary to Holy Scripture, the best Genuine Antiquity, and Right Reason: highly scandalous to the Christian Religion in General, destructive of Civil Government, fatal to Humane Society, and very pernicious both to the Spiritual and Temporal Concerns of the Practisers even in their private Capacity.

In short, I shall very plainly and briefly endeavour to make good two Assertions:

1. That there is no sufficient Ground for any one to forsake the Communion of the Church of *England*, and incorporate with that of *Rome*.
2. That there is all Reason imaginable both for such as have been educated in the *Roman* Communion, to *Reform*; and for such as have unwarily ingaged with her, to *Return*.

This was the happy Result of these following Considerations upon my own Heart: And it shall be my Prayer that they may have the same Blessed Effect in the impartial Perusers of them.

The sacred Oracles of the Holy Scriptures deservedly Command our first Inquiry.

We have Cardinal *Belarmine's* own Concession, that in the grand Question of the Church, the Scripture is better known than the Church. Consequently then, not only her Authority but her very Being must be subordinate to it. And therefore in the first place let us see what Sentiments the Church of *England* hath of these Heavenly Records, and whether Hers, or those of the *Roman* Church be more Consonant to Pure Antiquity, Reason, and Holy Writ it self.

All Protestants, and particularly the Church of *England*, *Artic. 6.* look upon the Holy Scriptures to contain all things necessary to Salvation; so that whatever is not read in them, or cannot be proved from them, is not to be Imposed on any, to be received as an Article of Faith, or a Necessary Requisite

quisite to Salvation. Whence it appears, that they take Them to be the Only, Complete, and Adequate Rule both of Faith and Life: sufficiently intelligible and easie in matters that concern what is simply necessary to make us *Good* and *Happy*.

They consequently hold, that since Holy Scripture is the Rule of our Faith, it must have an exact Proportion to that, whereof it is a Rule. So that Matters of Faith are not to be extended beyond this Rule, nor can any unwritten Traditions any way be pretended to appertain to the Substance of Faith.

Moreover, the Rule being the Idea, Model and great Exemplar of what is regulated by it, it is in order of Nature before the thing so regulated. And if the word of God be antecedent to Faith it self, it must likewise precede the Faithful themselves; and if the Faithful, then must it have Preheminence before the Church it self, which is nothing else but the Congregation of the Faithful. Thus the Church of *Rome* will evidently fall short of that Pre-rogative she so presumptuously arrogates, of being both *Before*, and *Above* the Scripture.

Again, a Rule consisting in *Indivisibili*, as we say, *i. e.* being of that Nature that it is not to be enlarged or diminished; how guilty are they who either make Additions to, or Subtractions from it? Both which the *Roman* Church practiseth, as *de facto* will be manifest in the Sequel of this small Tract.

In Fine they hold the Word of God written, to be that one, infallible, entire Rule, whereby all men, Learned and Unlearned, may in all necessary and fundamental Points of Faith and Manners be sufficiently instructed what is to be embraced for *True* and *Good*: That it is a Rule most Certain, Plain, Universal, Impartial, not addicted to one Side more than another: (which neither Pope, Conclave nor Council can so much as pretend to) of Power and Authority able to convince the Consciences of such as use it, and from which there can be no Appeal. And the only Cause why any miss of the True Faith, is, because they do not sincerely seek and find out this infallible Rule; or having found it, will not with an obedient Mind captivate their Understanding, but have Access to it with Pride, Curiosity, Prejudice, or some other unmortified Lust or Impediment.

More especially the Church of *England*, besides that high Veneration that she her self hath for these sacred Books, labours to confirm and root the same in the Hearts of her obedient Children, by her Devout Practice. For, to omit the Frequent, Laborious and Judicious Preaching and Expounding of them in this Church; she hath so prudently disposed of her publick Liturgy, that every day some Part and Portion of both Testaments is appointed to be read: The whole Book of Psalms is gone through once a Moneth, the Old Testament once, and the New thrice every year; with other most excellent Exercises of Piety; (at which even the *Romanists* themselves

selves can take no just Exception ; and a very great Author affirms, that a modern Pope would have approved the whole Service-Book, had his Authority but been acknowledged) which discreet Course cannot but afford much heavenly Instruction and Consolation to the constant Attenders on such Blessed Opportunities.

But what saith the Church of *Rome* all this while in this Business? In her *Trentine* Council, Sess. 4. Can. 1. She expressly Decrees, that unwritten Traditions are of equal Authority with the written Word ; that they are to be received with the same Reverence and Affection. And Cardinal *Hofius*, who was one who in the Popes Name presided at that Council, defends that most Blasphemous Speech of *Wolfgangus Hermannus*, that the Scripture is of no more Authority than *Esop's Fables*, but for the Churches and Popes Approbation, lib. 3. *de Authorit. Script.* The Council of *Basil* would fain perswade us that the Churches Acts and Customs must be to us instead of the Scriptures, (*Instr habeant Sacrarum Scripturarum*) for that the Scripture and Churches Customs both require the same Affection and Respect.

Indeed I find the *Romish* Doctors in nothing more fluent than in degrading and vilifying the Scriptures. Our Country man, Dr. *Stapleton*, positively affirms, that the Church hath Authority to put into the Number of Books of Scripture, and to make Canonical the Writings of *Hermes* and Constitutions of *Clement* (two famous Counterfeits) and that then they would have the same Authority which other Books have, canonized by the Apostles themselves. Some call them a Nose of Wax, to be wrested any way. Cardinal *Cusanus* blushes not to write that the Scriptures are fitted to the time, and variously understood ; the sense thereof being one while this, and another while that, according as it pleases the Church to change her Judgment. Some teach that the Scripture is not simply necessary, that God gave it not to the People but to the Doctors and Pastors; and that we must live more according to the Dictates of the Church, than the Scripture. *Eckius*, the great Antagonist of *Luther*, would make us believe that Christ never gave any Command to his Apostles, to write any thing. Which yet seems very odd, when such an express Injunction was lay'd on *S. John* to write that mystical Book of the Apocalypse, which certainly is not more conducing to the Churches Edification than our B. Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and the many other practical Discourses both of himself and his Disciples. In a word, the most ingenuous and civil among their Writers think they have pay'd all due Respect to Holy writ, when they term it a Dumb Judge, Dead Ink, or Ink shaped into various Forms and Characters. Notwithstanding which I humbly conceive, that let an Indifferent Person open the Bible and the Canons of the Council of *Trent* together, and he will receive at least as clear and full Satisfaction from the Bible, as from the other ; unless we will impiously deny Almighty God the Faculty of expressing his holy Will and Pleasure as intelligibly as frail Men can theirs : or without any shew of Reason affirm with a late Divine, that Religion it self was never fully settled till that upstart Conventicle.

Con-

Conformable to the Sentiments are the Practices of that Church, in keeping the Bible lock'd up in an Unknown Tongue from the Use of the Vulgar. *Clement* the Eighth very strictly orders all Vulgar Translations to be put into the Index of Prohibited Books. And in *Italy* and *Spain*, and wherever the Inquisition hath the least Jurisdiction, the very keeping of them is a Crime no less than Capital.

It is true, where the Reformation hath got any footing, Faculties are sometimes granted to read a Translation; but clog'd with so many Proviso's and various Cautions, and their Spiritual Guides give so small Encouragement to it, that it seems rather a Trick to stop the Mouthes of their Adversaries, when they Object the Prohibition of Reading Scripture, than any real Intention of Promoting so Pious an Exercise among their Devotes. Besides, their other Forms of Devotion, Rosaries, or saying over the Beads after divers Methods, our Ladies Office, Prayers for the Dead, Manuals, the long Litanies of Saints, hearing of Masses, reading of Legends, &c. are in so great Vogue, and take up so considerable a Time, that I scarce see how any can be allotted for that contemned Employment of studying Gods Word: which ought to be the Meditation of every good Christian Day and Night. Indeed this neglect (to say no worse) of Holy Scripture is so notorious among, and so peculiar to those of that Way, and the Ignorance not only of the Laity but of divers of the Clergy in that kind of Learning especially, is so gross, that it would be a Work of Supererogation to attempt the proof of it: Their Doctors generally pretending Translations of Scripture to be the cause of all Heresies and Phanaticism. Nay, I have met with one so frantick, that he thinks it was the Devils invention to permit the people to read the Bible. *Martin. Presb. de Tradit.* And I remember *Thyrtiens de Deminiac*, c. 21. says, that thence he knew certain Persons to be possess'd by the Devil, because being but Husbandmen they were able to discourse concerning Scripture.

We will now see what Holy Writ it self, untainted Antiquity, and unprejudiced Reason alleage in this Case: and which side they patronize, the Reformation or the Church of *Rome*.

S. Paul gives this Encomium of his Disciple *Timothy*, 2 *Ep. c. 3. v. 15*. That from a Child he had been Conversant in the Holy Scriptures, and tells him they were able to make him *Wise to Salvation* (which I hope is Knowledge enough, and I am sure is a more plain, compendious Path, than the crooked Labyrinths of uncertain Traditions, forged Decrees, Canons and Fathers.) He further assures him, that the same Divine Scriptures were profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction to Righteousness; that the Man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Work. For my part I know not what remains then for Tradition and such like Trash to perform, since the Word of God alone can so compleat us. *Solomon*, *Prov. 2. 9.* assures us that Gods Law alone will make a man understand Righteousness, and Judgment, and Equity, and Every good Work. The Prophet *Esa. c. 8. 20.* refers us to try all things by the Law and Testimony: and that

we must conclude those, to have no light, who speak not according to that Word. Our B. Saviour *Luke* 10. 26. When a Lawyer inquired of him what he should do to inherit Eternal Life: bids him have recourse to what was written in the Law, and asked him how he read there. S. *Luke* writ his Gospel to *Theophilus* a Lay Person. *Luke* 1. 4. to the end he might certainly know those things wherein he had been instructed. S. *John* writ his, as he himself testifies, *c.* 20. v. 31. that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we might have Life through him. *Abraham* sends *Dives* his Brethren to *Moses* and the Prophets, rather than to Visions, Apparitions, and private Revelations: which yet are so much pretended to and boasted of in the *Roman Church*. Christ himself submitted the Tryal both of his Doctrine and Miracles to the Censure of the Scriptures. *John* 5. 39. Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me. Thoughts are free, and I am apt to think that some will take the Liberty to judge it a little unreasonable, that our B. Saviour should so readily stand to the Verdict of *Moses* and the Prophets; and yet his pretended Vicar should scorn to submit to the Censure of Christ and his Apostles; but despise both their Doctrines and Practices with so many *Non Obstante's*, as appears by their new model'd Creed at this day: wherein *Pius* the fourth hath coined twelve new Articles of Faith, to shew his single Power equivalent to that of all the Apostles in General, who did but every one contribute his single Article to that ancient Symbol bearing their Name.

S. *Paul's* Auditors the *Bereans* are highly commended for searching the Scriptures daily, to examine whether the Doctrine they heard were true or no. *Act.* 17. 11. In Sum, the old Law was severely enjoined to the Reading and Meditation both of Prince, Priest and People; men, Women and Children, as is obvious to observe all along the Style thereof. And the *Jews* were so versed in it, as to be able to reckon up the Number of the Words, nay Letters contained therein. And the new Law excludes none, either from that *Common Salvation* it holds forth, or the means to attain it, which is the Doctrine of the Gospel. The Epistles are directed to Persons of all sorts and both Sexes. In fine, the whole Oeconomy both of the Old and New Testament is so diametrically opposite to the Practice of the *Roman Church* in this Point, that it is but too palpable that the three Main Pillars of Popery, are to keep the Prince in awe, the Priest in Honour; and the People in Ignorance.

Antiquity is so luxuriant in this point, that it will be a greater Difficulty to select than to accumulate. Famous is that Speech of *Constantine* the great to the Fathers in the Nicene Council, recorded by *Theodor. Histor.* l. 1. c. 7. and this Saying among the rest is very remarkable: We have the teaching of the Holy Ghost written: for the Evangelical and Apostolical Books and the old Prophets do evidently teach us the things that are needful to be known

known concerning God. Wherefore laying aside all Contention let us out of the Divinely Inspired Scripture, take the Resolution of those things we seek for. *Tertullian* contr. *Hermog.* in plain terms calls the Scripture *The Rule of Faith*. *St. Chrysostom* Hom. 13. in 2 *ad Cor.* styles it, A most Excellent Rule and Exact Ballance to try All things by. *St. August.* in l. 2. *de Nupt. & Concup.* c. 33. speaks thus : This Controversie depending between us requires a Judge : let Christ therefore judge, and let the Apostle *Paul* judge with him : because Christ speaks in his Apostle. But most Memorable is that Passage of *Optatus contr. Parmen.* l. 5. where he thus presses the *Donatist* : We are (saith he) to enquire out some to be Judges between us in these Controversies : The Christians cannot, because both sides cannot yield them : and by part-taking the Truth will be hindred : the Judge must be had from without our selves. If a *Pagan*, he knows not the Mysteries of Christianity : if a *Jew*, he is an Enemy to Baptisme : therefore on Earth no judgment concerning this matter can be found. The Judge must be had from Heaven. But to what end should we knock at Heaven, when here we have one in the Gospel ? Quotations might be Infinite, but I Superfede.

Nor did the Antient Fathers onely think this themselves, but by their frequent Translations of the Scripture, and vehement Exhortations to the People to read them so translated, they endeavoured to beget the same awful Respect to Gods Holy Word in the Minds of all. *Ulphilus*, a Bishop of the *Goths*, turned the Scripture into that Barbarous Language, as *Socrates* witnesses. *Methodius* into the *Sclavonian*. *S. Chrysostom.* hom. 1. in *Johan.* makes mention of *Syrian, Egyptian, Indian, Persian and Ethiopian* Translations. *Theodoret de Curand. Grac. Affect.* assures us the Bible was turned into all Languages used in the World, *Greek, Latin, Armenian, Scythian, Sarmatian, &c.* And we have at this day divers Fragments of them remaining. Venerable *Bede* shews the same of our own Country.

To speak plain : I know no Topick the Fathers are more Copious upon, than in calling upon the People to get Bibles, to read them, to examin what they hear by them, and severely inveighing against the Negligence of such as did not : According to the Apostles Advice even to the Laity, *Colos. 3. 16.* *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.*

Theodoret, before cited, gives this Account of his Times. You shall everywhere see these Points of our Faith to be known and understood, not only by such as are Teachers in the Church, but by Smiths, Weavers, and all kinds of Artificers : yea, all our Women, not only such as are Book-learned, but also by them who get their Living by the Needle, Maid-servants and Waiting-women : and not Citizens only, but Husbandmen are very skilful in these things. You may hear among us Ditchers and Neat-herds discoursing of the Trinity and the Creation.

And that the Laity were thus familiar with the Bible, may evidently be made out, in that *Nectarius*, of a Judge, was made Bishop of *Constantinople*; *St. Ambrose*, of a Secular Deputy, Bishop of *Milan*; *Gregory* the Father of *Nazianzen*, of a Lay-man was made a Bishop: *Origen* from a Child was Learned in the Scriptures; and to the great Joy of his Father *Leonides*, a Holy Martyr, often questioned with him concerning the meaning of difficult places. *Macrina*, *St. Basil's* Nurle, taught him the Scriptures when he was very young: and *Gorgonia*, the Sister of *St. Gregory Nazianzen*, was rarely well experienced in them.

I will wind up this Argument with declaring what was *St. Jerom's* mind in so Weighty a Business. He, besides his Writing to divers Women, as *Eustochium*, *Salvina*, *Celantia*, &c. commending their Labours in the Scriptures, and encouraging that study: speaking of the Noble Roman Lady *Paula*, in the Epitaph he made upon her, he extolls her for imposing a daily task of reading the Scriptures, on her Companions and Maids. But more signally in an Epistle to *Leta*, he gives her these Directions for the Education of her little Daughter. "Let the Child be deaf in hearing of light Musical Aires; but cause her every day to render a task of the Flowers of Holy Scripture. Let her not be sought for in the press of secular People, but in the Closet of the Scriptures, asking Counsel of the Prophets and Apostles concerning Spiritual Nuptials. Let her first learn the Psalter, and with those Heavenly Songs wean her self from light Sonnets. Then let her be taught to Govern her Life out of *Solomons Proverbs*; and repair to *Job* for Examples of Vertue and Patience. Let her then come to the *Evangelists*, and never lay those Books out of her hands. With these she must joyn the *Acts of the Apostles*, &c. But let her be cautious in *Apocryphal Books*, and if she read them, let her understand, that they are those Author's, whose Names they carry; and that many things faulty are mix'd with them; and it is no small Wisdom to find Gold among Dross.

To which excellent Advice, let me onely subjoyn what I find scattered up and down in *S. Augustin*; viz. To read plain Passages first, and heartily to practise what we understand; and as for obscure Places, Prophecies, Genealogies and Myteries, whereof we shall never be demanded an Account at the Day of Judgment, let us leave it to the Divine Pleasure, either to reveal them to us, or reserve them still Concealed: since our Saviour told his own Disciples that it was not for them to know the Times and Seasons: but plainly informed them, that he who did his Will should know of his Doctrine, whether he spoke from God or from himself. The same Father acquaints us with the admirable Commixture of Plainness and Obscurity in the Holy Scripture: that hereby *Wanton Wits* are wholly curbed, *Weak Wits* cherished, and *Great Wits*

Wits delighted : and that nothing of highest Importance is so perplexedly delivered in one Place, but it is as plainly set down in another.

I have enlarged a little more than I intended on this Theme, because I am verily perswaded, that if the Sober, Judicious *Roman* Catholicks of this Nation would be induced but for Tryal sake a while to intermit some of those Dry, Insipid Devotions, which take up so much of their Time; and exchange them for a Pious, Humble conversing with God's Word; they would soon be out of Conceit with what they are now so fond of; and discover the sandy Foundation of many of their Principles: and perhaps at last become of that good Abbots mind who was Uncle to Arch-Bishop *Whigfi*, and was often heard to complain, that their Religion must needs at last fail, because he found no ground for it in Gods Word.

Having considered hitherto the great Rule of our Faith and Life, we will now descend to that Article of our Creed which makes such a noise in the World, I mean the *Holy Catholick Church*: which, omitting the various Acceptations of the Word *Church*, as to our present Purpose, is nothing else but a Company of People united in the Profession of the True Faith of Christ, and due Use of the Sacraments.

I am not ignorant that the Papiſts would fain foist in another Requisite, to wit, *Under the Obedience of the Bishop of Rome, the only Vicar of Christ upon Earth*. But to omit many other Absurdities, I shall only instance at present in two: that hereby they exclude Universality, which they put down as an Essential Note of the True Church; and Charity, which I am sure is a certain Badg of Christ's true Disciples. For by this very Clause, they very ridiculously obtrude less than a fourth part for the Whole; and by excommunicating all the rest from the Pale of the Church, as much as in them lies, very mercifully Doome greater, more antient and better Churches than themselves to everlasting flames.

To make this good, we will take our Measures by the Judicious Observation of Sir *Edwyn Sands*, who in his *Survey of Europe*, assures us that the *Greek* Church in Number exceeds any other: and the *Protestants* in Multitude and extent of Territory fall very little short of those that are under the *Papal* Yoke. So that here we have two four Parts. To which add all the *Oriental* Christians, and those in the Vast Empire of *Prester John*, or the *Abyssines*, who are all out of the *Roman* Communion; and questionless we shall find another fourth Part. And thus we have three to one, even in the point of Universality.

I will put this out of all dispute by a particular Induction.

In *Asia* we have Multitudes of Christians who have nothing to do with the Pope. Those of *Palestine* are subject to the Patriarch of *Jerusalem*: the *Syrians*, under him of *Antioch*: the *Armenians* and *Georgians*.

Georgians have their own Patriarchs. The *Circassians*, and those of the lesser *Asia*, are under him of *Constantinople*: The *Jacobines* and the Christians of *St. Thomas* have also their peculiar Patriarchs.

In *Africa*, where we find any steps of Christianity, the *Egyptians* and *Cophes* are under the Patriarch of *Alexandria*; the *Eshioptions* or *Abyssinians*, which are innumerable, are under their own Governours Ecclesiastical.

In *Europe*, the *Greeks* submit to the Patriarch of *Constantinople*. The spacious Empire of the *Russians* hath a Patriarch at *Mosco*. The Kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, *Denmark*, *Swedenland*, and the far greatest part of the *United Netherlands*, *Switzerland*, *Germany* and *Hungaria*, are subject to Bishops and Church-Officers of their own, without any dependance upon Him at *Rome*. Even in *Bohemia*, *Poland*, *France*, *Transylvania*, some Countreys of *Italy* there are multitudes of Reformed Churches, which have nothing to do with the *Popes* Jurisdiction. And thus that Large Universality of Power that the Old Gentleman at *Rome* brags of, is at last shrunk away into *Spain*, part of *France*, *Italy* and *Poland*, some of the Cantons of *Switzerland*, some of the Low Countreys and *Germany*. And here you have a Map of the *Papal Universality*.

They boast indeed much of their New Acquisitions in the *Indies*: but (not to Examine by what Right they Invaded those Countreys) after such a brutish manner were those Conversions made, driving the poor Natives to Baptisme, like Herds of Beasts to Watering, that their own Writers blush at Recording it. And when all comes to all, it will appear, that they Butcher'd more than they Baptiz'd. *Bartholomews Casa*, a Bishop that lived in those Countreys, and *Acosta* the Jesuit, are sufficient Witnesses in this matter.

And since We are entred upon this much cryed up Universality of the *Roman Church*, it will not be amiss to glance a little at those other Claims and Pretensions whereby she would Impose her self on the World, for the Only, Immaculate Spouse of our Blessed Saviour.

Antiquity is much talked of, and it is a kind of Universality in regard of Time, as that before mentioned, was of Place and Persons. But how groundlesly the *Roman Church* appropriates and ingrosses it to her self, is too apparent from the Novel *Tridentine Constitutions and Articles*. And besides, it can be no Discriminating Note, in as much as it is applicable to things prophane as well as Sacred; even to Paganism it self; and to Heresies (many of which are as Antient as the first Century) as well as to Orthodox Doctrine. And if we come down to Practice, we shall find it far more feasible to discover the

True

True Church here or there at present; than to discern where it was in the constant Series of many Ages. History being one of the most obscure, intricate, tedious and fallacious Principles, in this case, whereon we can possibly proceed. Nor could any particular Church or the Catholick Church it self at the Beginning lay any Claim to the Title of being ancient. Besides, the Characteristical of Truth is not so much to be *Antiqua*, Old, as *Prima*, from the Beginning, from Christ and his Apostles: and such Antiquity the Church of *England* is very willing to be tryed by in every one of her Articles. So that here are two Conditions deficient, *Soli & Semper*: Antiquity belongs not only to the True Church, nor is it alwayes competible to it.

To this is reducible their Duration or Continuance, but this is rejected in the same manner as their Antiquity is: to which it is so near allyed.

And here by the way we have a most Satisfactory Reply to that thredbare Demand, *Where was your Religion before Luther?* I will not at present use his Answer, though very good; *That it was in the Bible, where theirs never was.* Nor will I demand where theirs was before the late Assembly at *Trent*, some years after *Luther?* But I say it was by wonderful Providence preserved all along down from the Apostles dayes to ours, and so will be to the Consummation of the World. So we need not turn over all the immense Volumes of Antiquity to give in a Catalogue of visible Professors of the Reformation, (and yet this may and hath been sufficiently done) but our only Task is to prove our Religion the same which was taught by the Blessed Jesus and his Apostles; which can only be done by appealing to the Sacred Records of the Gospel: and as for the Professors, we have his Promise that he will preserve a Select Company (though sometimes living in a corrupt visible Church, as Wheat among Tares, or the seven thousand in *Elisha's* time that had not bowed their Knees to *Baal*. 1 Kings 19. 18.) to his second Coming; though he hath not told us where to find them in every year. And therefore such as go about to demonstrate that such Professors were not in Being, do but attempt to enervate our Saviours Promise, and render themselves and Christianity equally ridiculous.

The Multitude Extent, and Variety of their own Professors is indeed Matter of great Ostentation; and it hath in part been adverted to in the Business of Universality. But in Truth it is so far from being a certain Argument of the Truth of their Church, that it rather concludes the Contrary. Fear not little Flock, sayes our Saviour; and strive to enter in at the Straight Gate. What shall we think of that time *S. Jerome* speaks of, *Cum ingenuis Orbis & Mirabatur se factum Arianum?* when, as *Vincentius Lyrinensis* speaks, in a manner all the Latin Bishops partly by Force and part-

ly by Fraud, were deluded into Arianisme? It is indeed a Note of Anti-Christ, *Revel. 17.* That the Whore shall sit upon many Waters; which Waters are People, and Nations and Tongues.

As for the Name *Catholic*, so often objected, we know that Names have little Weight with wise men; that there were some Hereticks who called themselves *Apostolical Men*; that *S. John* in his *Apocalypse* tells us there were such as had a Name to live, but were dead; and that *Bellarmino* himself acknowledges, that if one only Province should retain the True Faith, yet might it be called *Catholic*.

The Succession of Bishops from the Apostles times, is another very plausible Topick, on which they much Descant: and I confess it bore great Sway with me for a long time, especially as to the Validity of Holy Orders. Yet upon Mature Deliberation I found more of Pomp than real Solidity in this Pageant: though our Ears are continually filled with Clamour about it. For neither doth it agree only with the true Church, since themselves acknowledge it among the *Greeks*, (as in the Patriarchates of *Constantinople* and *Alexandria*: the former whereof derives from *S. Mark*, the other down successively from *S. Andrew* to this day:) nor, if you will credit *S. Ambrose de panit. l. 1. c. 6.* is Succession of Persons so much to be heeded as Succession of Doctrine; *Non habent hereditatem Petri, qui fidem Petri non habent.* Wherefore if the present *Roman* Church want the Life and Soul of True Apostolical Succession, to wit, Apostolical Doctrine, a meer local and titular Succession is little worth.

But the Mischief is, that the visible Succession of Bishops in that Sea, is not so Glorious and Uninterrupted as is pretended. And this is notorious in all Monuments of History and Antiquity, that it hath been foully stained by Simoniack and Violent Entries upon the Popedom; by Schismatical Intrusions, and by a perfect Alteration of the very Form and Substance of Election appointed by the Apostles, and practised in the primitive Church. For either *S. Peter* named his Successor, or he was chosen by the Clergy alone, or else by the Clergy and People, and then confirmed by the Emperour. But now he is chosen by a pack of Cardinals, a sort of Clergy altogether unheard of in primitive Ages, all created by Popes themselves, some in Favour to their Kindred, others in Faction, and to curry Kindness with some Christian Princes, especially those of *France*, and the House of *Austria*, who alwayes have their Creatures very busie in the Conclave; most of them as fit for Clergy-men as *S. Peter* was for a Courtier, as my Lord of *Hereford* speaks in his Legacy; a Spruce, Delicate, Effeminate Clergy: (and the World talks far worse things of them) very fit persons for the Choice of *S. Peters* infallible Successor.

The truth is, this boasted succession is so weak a support to the Roman Cause, that their most confident Champions could never so much as pretend the very shadow of Divine Authority for it. *Alphonse à Castro* and others very frankly acknowledge it is not *De fide*, a matter of Faith, that this or that, or the present Pope is *S. Peter's Successor*. But of this more by and by. Nor is there the least agreement in Ecclesiastical History concerning the Immediate Successor of *S. Peter*. Some put *Linus* next, some *Clement*, some *Cletus*. And it is a most miserable Shift that *Bellarmin* is put to, and below his great Wit, to affirm the business may be thus Composed; That *S. Peter* left his Episcopal Seat to *Clement*: but *Clement*, when *S. Peter* was dead, out of his Humility would not ascend the Chair, as long as *Linus* and *Cletus* were living, who had been the Coadjutors of *S. Peter* in his Episcopal Function: so *Linus* succeeded *S. Peter*, *Cletus* to *Linus*, and *Clement* to *Cletus*. But if *S. Peter* left his Chair to *Clement*, how comes this Apostolical constitution to be abolished, and why do not the Popes now design their Successors, but leave a matter of so high Consequence to the factious Canvassing of the Haughty Ambitious Cardinals? How durst *Clement* refuse the Charge; intrusted to him by so great an *Apostle*, and that only out of a Compliment?

A Man that duly ponders this Circumstance, might very well conclude it to be a most remarkable Providence of God, and intended for the humbling of that proud Church, that when they come to make good their claim to that Exorbitant, unlimited Authority they at this day Exercise in the Christian World, they should stumble at the very Threshold, as we say, and fall in the very first name of their Vaunted Catalogue. In a Word, all things here are dark and in a Riddle, and afford not sufficient matter even to ground an *Implicit Faith* upon.

But what shall we think of those long and frequent Vacations in that See for some years together? and Schisms for 30 nay 70 years? Which was a long Vacation indeed; for it is *Bellarmin's* Rule, *An uncertain Pope is accounted for none at all*. Nay many and great Authors have put a Woman into the Succession; many of their Bishops have been Hereticks, and this makes another Interruption: even Occult Heresie rendering the Pope, *ipso facto*, none.

Let Cardinal *Baronius*, a Man of undoubted Authority with them, serve instead of a thousand Witnesses. He, treating of the year of our Lord, 912, thus represents the wretched, deformed Face of that Church. How filthy a time was it when Whores bare all the sway at *Rome*? At their pleasure Sees were changed, Bishopricks disposed of, and which is most horrible and scarce to be uttered, their *Gallants* were thrust into the Seat of *Peter*. We find no where any mention of Clergy choosing or giving Consents, all Canons were put to silence, the Pontifical Decrees were choaked, Ancient Traditions proscribed, and all Sacred Rites extinguished. Thus had *Luft* gotten every thing into its own hands.

Where did this Uninterrupted Succession sleep all this While? Well near 200 years together, saies the same Annalist, did these monstrous abuses continue. Certainly if Discontinuance of Time, or Illegal Entry can marr a succession, this of the *Romish* Church is sufficiently spoiled. *Benedict* the 9th was a Boy of 10 years old. *John* the 13th. a Hectoring Lad not above 18. *John* the 11th. was set up by that Infamous Strumpet *Theodora*: and her Daughter *Marozia* by force of Arms deposed him. *John* the 12th. was Bastard to *Sergius* by *Marozia*, and was violently intruded into the Popedome by his Mother.

It is not so much the wickedness of these Popes Lives, as the manner of their Creation, that we urge to invalidate the Succession. Above 50 Popes were thus installed successively for those 200 years: besides many other occasions, frequently occurring in History, wherein this applauded Succession hath been very notably disturbed.

To which if we adjoin the 30 Schisms, wherein 2 and 3 Popes have been set up in opposition to one another; the matter will be out of all Controversie. One of these Schisms, viz. that between *Clement* and *Urban* lasted for 70 years, till the Duke of *Savoy* was Elected Pope by the Council of *Basil*, to put a period to that fatal Tragedy. And many of these Competitors had such Learned Advocates and Patrons, that *Bellarmin* cannot assign which was the true Pope. — *pudet hæc opprobria vobis* — *Et dici potuisse et non potuisse refelli.*

Their Unity is no less bragg'd of, than their Universality and Succession; and with as little Justice; for Unity without Truth and sincere Charity is but a Conspiracy or Confederation. I find *Revel.* 17. 13. that in the Kingdom of *Anti-Christ*, they are of one mind, and make War with the Lamb. And the Devils themselves in the possess'd person could unite into a Legion. And if we a little better consider this pretended *Roman* Unity, it will soon be discovered to be purely slavish and enforced: an Unity of Fear more than of Affection; a product of the Inquisition rather than of Charity. *Bellarmin* seems to intimate as much; They cannot think otherwise, saith he, because they have subjugated their sense to the sense of another; meaning the Pope.

Nor yet is this their Unity, let the Quality of it be what it will, so compleat as they would make us believe. How do the *Jansenists* and *Jesuits* at this day hug one another? The large Order of the *Dominicans* look upon the *Jesuits* as no better then *Semi-Pelagians* in the Doctrine of Grace and Free Will: and the *Jesuits* to requite them call them *Calvinists*. The *Seculars* and *Regulars* how Unanimous they are, appears by their continual Clashing. And those who are thoroughly acquainted with their Customs, may easily perceive that there are as many *Sects* and *Factions* in point of Opinion, as there are *Religious Orders* in that Church; and in point of Charity and Affection, as many parties as there are *Religious Houses*. But as for that real Unity, which according

according to *Dominic. Bannes*, in 2. 2. q. 1. a. 10. consists in: having one God and Christ for our King, in being governed by the same Holy Law, in having the same Faith, Hope and Charity, the same Heavenly Example, one worship in Spirit and in Truth, one Communion or Communication of the Members; which is the Unity of that Church which includes all the Faithful from the beginning of the World to the end, &c. In short, such an Unity as the Holy Scriptures require, in being derived from one beginning, which is the Holy Ghost, who as one Soul quickens and moves all the Parts: in having one Head which is Jesus Christ: and in being but one Body, partaking the same Doctrine, Sacraments and Worship of God: This Unity by God's Grace all true Protestants breath after, as may apparently be evinced by the Harmony of their Confessions; although in points of smaller importance there may be some little differences: and most of their Dissentions are rather Verbal than Real.

As to the Sanctity of that Church, let but the Lives of the *Roman* Bishops be perused, written by their own Authors (a noysome Sink and Kennel of Abomination can never be raked up in all Antiquity: some *Atheists*, some *Conjurors*, some *Adulterers*, *Murderers*, *Incestuous*, *Sodomites*, *Simoniacks*, and what not?) the manners and conversation of their Clergy, Religious Men and Women, so heinously tax'd and inveigh'd against by those Famous Writers of their own side, *S. Bernard*, *Nic. Clemangis*, *Alvar*, *Pelagius*, *Claud. Especeus*, &c. and at least they will have little cause so boldly to challenge, and appropriate it to themselves above all their Neighbours. These things are sufficiently known to any that have viewed their Doctors, or conversed even with their Modern practices: (though themselves are very much amended since the Reformation.) But I love not to tell stories out of the School, and I promised at first to refrain from personal Reflections. There are Books enough on this Subject, and the World talks sufficiently loud of it.

If all the precedent Privileges signify nothing, at last we must be overborn by whole Legions of Innumerable Miracles that are obtruded upon our Credit. But so spurious, so ridiculous, so impious many of them, that the more modest and discreet among themselves dare not own them. Their best Writers affirm, That Miracles are not necessary for the Being of a Church, but only for the Beggetting of a new Faith, or an Extraordinary Mission.

Nay I may add not for an Extraordinary Mission neither; as we may see in many of the Prophets of the Old Testament, of whose Miracles not one word is mentioned. Nor are they at all to be expected from or by the Protestants, who neither profess a new Faith nor an Extraordinary Mission. The Miracles of our Saviour, his Apostles and the first Age of the Church, are sufficient *Seals* to the Doctrine they own. And as for those so importunately urged by the *Romanists*, they are but too often convinced to be meer juggles, contrivances for filthy Lucre, Sleights to uphold some gainful Doctrine, or to advance the reputation of some particular place or Religious Order, done

in a Corner; of a far different Nature from those of our B. Saviour, and rather of the same stamp with those the Apostle speaks of. *2 Thess. 2. 9.* belonging to him, who comes with all Power and *Signs and Lying Wonders*: and *Revel. 13. 13.* who doth *great Wonders*, so that he makes fire come down from Heaven on Earth in the Sight of Men. A man that duly considers the most palpable Cheats and Impositions of this kind daily practised in the Church of *Rome* for these By-Respects, would almost be of *Mr. Chillingworth's* mind, that it cannot be sufficiently made out, that ever so much as a *Lame Horse* was cured by way of Miracle in confirmation of any Popish Tenet.

Some insist much on the Outward Prosperity, Pomp, Splendour and Magnificence of their Church. To this the Wise Man hath given an answer, *Eccles. 9. 1.* *Our Works are in the hand of God, and no man knows either Love or Hatred by all that is before him.* Nay, our Saviour puts it down as a Mark of the false Church. *Joh. 16. 20.* *Verily I say unto you, that you shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoyce.*

It remains then, that the onely Certain and Evident marks of a True Apostolical Church are, *The Sincere Preaching of God's Word*, and a *Due Administration of the Sacraments*. To which may be annexed *Ecclesiastical Discipline*; but this is reducible to the other two. These are All that the Holy Scriptures afford us. *Matth. 28. 19.* *Go and Teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you.* *Act. 2. 42.* *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in Breaking of Bread, and Prayers.*

Having thus survey'd the *Roman Church* in general, it will hardly be thought Good Manners, if we neglect his Holiness the Pope in particular, or as some are pleased to flatter him, *The Church Virtual*. For what ever stir and bustle they make about the Church their *Mother*, the plain English of their meaning is nothing but the Pope their *Father*.

It is the expresse Doctrine of *S. Thomas Aquinas* (and his Doctrine in that Church is little less than Canonized) *2. 2. q. 1. a. 10.* that the making of a true Creed belongs to the Pope; as all other things do which belong to the Whole Church: and that the Whole Authority of the Universal Church abides in him. *2. 2. q. 12. a. 2.* Thus as they take all Authority and Sufficiency from the Scripture and give it to the Church, so all the Church's Authority they attribute to the Pope. *Gregorius de Valentia*, one of the Learnedst Jesuits, tells us plainly, That by the Church they mean *Its Head*; that is to say, the *Roman Bishop*, in whom resides the full Authority of the Church, when he pleases to Determine matters of Faith, whether he doth it with a Council or without. *Bellarmino* teaches, that the Pope himself without any Council may decree matters of Faith. *Bannes* affirms, that the Authority of the Universal Church, the Authority of a Council, and the Authority

thority of the Pope, are one and the same thing. *The Canon Law in Sext. Extr. v. Johan. 22. c. Cum inter. in Gloss.* speaks thus, It is Heresie to think Our Lord God the Pope may not Decree as he doth. And *Distinct. 19. in Canon.* His Rescripts and Decretal Epistles are Canonical Scripture.

All which passages clearly convince us what is the meaning of those perpetual Braggs of the Catholick Church.

His Holyness must excuse me, if, being no Courtier, I address not my self to him in the phrase of the Roman Inscription to *Paul* the V. yet to be seen in that City, saluting him as a *Vice-God*, and the Stout Assertor of the *Pontifical Omnipotency*: or as the *Gloss of the Canon Law* in their last and best Editions, viz. the *Roman*, 1580, and *Parisian*, 1612. *Our Lord God the Pope*. Waving therefore these Ceremonies, I shall summarily consider his Authority, both what he pretends to, and what it really is.

And here starts forth a material Difficulty, even at our first setting out: namely, Whether *S. Peter*, whence all this Power and Sovereignty is pretended, were himself Bishop of *Rome*, or were indeed ever at *Rome*? I will not Deny either, because I know many of the Antients plead for both. But the Point being onely grounded on Humane Authority (for Divine Authority seems rather to contradict it) i. e. Ecclesiastical History; and the Differences among the Reporters being so Many and so Considerable, both in Chronology and divers other Weighty Circumstances; and the Probabilities that are produced against it being not altogether Contemptible, I hope a Man may be excused from being a *Damn'd Hererick*, if he do not believe it to be a Fundamental Article of Faith (*The Article of the Standing or Falling Church*, sayes a Modern Famous Controvertist) and consequently hath a Meaner Esteem for all that prodigious Train of Positions, which are thence deduced.

These following Inducements make it at least Doubtful whether *S. Peter* ever was Bishop of *Rome*, or was ever there.

For his ever having been at *Rome*, we do not much stand upon it. But the Reasons and Testimonies brought out of Humane Histories (which onely mention it) are so uncertain and involv'd with such difficulties, as may make any Man deservedly question it. *Vellenns* hath published several Demonstrations that he was never there. And those Authorities of the Fathers that are alleged for it are so Various, that the Learned't Romanists cannot reconcile them. *Marsilius Patavinus* in his *Defens. Pacis*, part. 2. c. 16. sayes, By Scripture it cannot be made out, either that *S. Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*, or that he was ever there at all: and when he considers the Ecclesiastical Historians that affirm it, he doth it so, that it is evident he doth not believe them. It is true, *S. Peter* in his 1. Ep. c. 5. 13. writes as from *Babylon*; but that *Babylon* was in *Assyria*. For though in the Apocalyptical Visions, *Rome* is designed by *Babylon*; yet in a plain Epistolary Salutation there was no reason at all for such a Trope. Nor doth *S. Paul* or *S. Luke*, who make frequent mention of *Rome*, ever call it *Babylon*.

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There is indeed an *Old Chair* at *Rome*, pretended to be *S. Peter's*, and on certain daies it is shewn to the people; as likewise a *Sepulchre*, and certain parts of his Body, as Relicks. But the Jugling and Imposition with Reliques and such like Trumpery is so well known, that the World hath long since lessen'd her Credit to such Monuments. Nor hath it been the lowest part of *Rome's* Policy for many Ages with Feigned Miracles, Counterfeit Relicks, and Forged Records and Legends to raise in the Vulgar an Opinion of her Holiness, and so maintain her Grandeur. But we have been too long on this Impertinency.

Whether He was ever Bishop of *Rome*, deserves our stricter Examination. Holy Writ seems not silent here, as in the former Case, but fully Opposite.

S. Peter and *S. Paul* by the Instinct of the Holy Ghost made an Accord that *S. Peter* should Preach to the *Jews*, and *S. Paul* to the *Gentiles*. Whereupon in the Sacred Text *S. Peter's* peculiar Title is, *The Apostle of the Circumcision*: and Consequent to his Charge we see, that he wrote his Epistles to the scatter'd Jews: neither did he direct any to, or date any from *Rome*. So that it is incredible he should be Bishop or Resident there for 25 years. Whereas *S. Paul* was the *Great Doctor and Apostle of the Gentiles*, and both writ to the *Romans*, and taught and was imprisoned at *Rome* for several Years, as is evident from Scripture. Again, the Authours of this Story (the first whereof were probably *Papias* and *Dionysius*, the one too Credulous and Erroneous, the other a Counterfeit) are wholly at a loss in declaring when *S. Peter* came to *Rome*, how long he sat there, when he dyed, and who were his Successors. And the most tolerable Account that is given by the best Writers, How *S. Peter*, the 5th Year after Christ's Passion, went to *Antioch*, and there fix'd his Episcopal See for 7 years, thence removed to *Rome*, and there continued 25 Years; is no waies coherent with what is related of *S. Peter*, *Galat. 1. & 2. Act. 12. & 15*. From which places it is manifest, that *S. Peter's* most usual Abode was at *Jerusalem*, at least till the 18th year after Christ's death, and the 17th of *S. Paul's* Conversion. Nor is it likely that *S. Peter* settled his Chair at *Antioch* so long, since *Galat. 2*. we read only of his passing by there; and that he was so far from behaving himself as their Bishop, that he seems to have understood little of the Affairs of that Church, till *S. Paul* had rightly informed him.

In the 16. to the *Romans* *St. Paul* salutes very many by name, yet takes not the least notice of *S. Peter*, nor gives them the least account where he was, or how he did: which seems something odd, if *S. Peter* had then been their *Sovereign Pastor*. And when *S. Paul* was himself at *Rome*, and writ diverse Epistles in the Reign of *Nero* (at which time *Bellarmin* would have *S. Peter* to have been at *Rome*) though he make mention of many others of inferior rank, yet not one syllable of *S. Peter*. Nay he generally denies that there was any such present with him. *Colos. 4. 11*. And *2. Tim. 4. 16*. he grievously complains that at his first Answer, when he appeared before *Nero*, All
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men forsook him. And when S. Paul came first to Rome, the Jews there, who were S. Peter's peculiar charge, seemed to know nothing of the Gospel. *Act. 28.* Thus S. Peter must be Bishop of Rome 25 years, and yet never be at Rome, when ever the Scripture mentions the Roman Church: And S. Paul could never find him there, though he is reported to be Martyred there at the same time with him.

We see then upon how tottering a Foundation this mighty Fabrick depends: I mean, how justly Questionable the Papal Monarchy is, even in matter of *Fact*, and to its very *An fit*. But perhaps it may plead better for it self in point of *Right and Equity*.

We will briefly here inquire into two things. 1. What Authority S. Peter had. 2. What Authority the Pope pretends to derive from him, and how justly.

That our Lord and Saviour never intended such an *Absolute, Arbitrary, Sovereign, Monarchical Government* in his Church, as the Pope at this day exercises both over Clergy and Layity, is as evident in the Gospel as any Truth there contained, *Matth. 20. 25.* *You know, saith Christ, that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, &c. But it shall not be so among you: Whoever will be great among you, let him be your servant. And the Apostle, Eph. 4. 11.* reckoning up the whole *Sacred Oeconomy, Ministry and Government of the Church*, lets not fall one word concerning a *Visible Monarch*: He gave some *Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers*; for the *Perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ*. And when he recommends Unity, by reason of one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Faith, one Baptism, one Lord; there is no mention at all of any Pontifical Monarch.

In all the New Testament there is not any one called the Head of the Church, but only our Blessed Saviour. *Eph. 1. 22.* *God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to his Church.* And chap. 4. 15. *Grow up to him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. Colos. 1. 18.* *He is the Head of the Body, the Church.* Wherefore they are highly injurious to our Saviour who set up any other.

Nor do Protestant Princes take themselves to be Heads of their own particular Churches, in any other sense than the good Kings of *Israel* and *Juda* were; to defend the Orthodox Religion, and maintain good Order and Discipline in the Church; and take cognizance of abuses crept in among any persons Ecclesiastical or Civil, and reform what they find amiss, according to the Canon of the Scripture, by the advice of their Chief Clergy. And not as the Papists impertinently object concerning *Q. Elizabeth*, that she had assumed power to preach, administer the Sacraments &c.

And all this, as I said before, is the undoubted Right of Sovereign Princes in their own Territories, and was practised by the Good Princes under the Old Law, with great Commendation and Reward. It was likewise promi-
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sed to the New, That *Kings* should be *Nursing Fathers*, and *Queens Nursing Mothers* to the Church.

In fine, that Paternal Wisdom and Providence of God, which so plentifully revealed to us All matters of importance for our own private Good, for the Being or Well-being of his Church; (and certainly this great pretended Jurisdiction must be of that Nature) that the most Curious Inquirer can desire nothing more; and which did under the *Mosaical Dispensation* so exactly describe the Condition and Power of the High Priest, even to the minute Circumstances of his Garments; so that none could be so stupid among the Jews, but if he read the Books of *Moses*, he might sufficiently understand that there was a High-Priest constituted; and what Authority he had; would certainly have left us some intimation of the like Regiment under the Gospel, had there been any such matter to be expected. Whereas, on the contrary we cannot there find so much as the Name or Title of any such Dignity, nor of any Seat appointed for his Residence; no singular Office is assigned to him above others, no Ensigns of Sovereignty are recorded, whereby He might be distinguished from others, no manner of Succession is provided for; nor is there the least practice or exercise of such a singular Absolute Power so much as hinted at in the whole New Testament. And therefore we may justly conclude it to be an upstart Usurpation, and no Authority of Divine Institution.

There are but two passages in Scripture that with any tolerable shew can be made use of, to countenance this Supremacy that is so much urged to be conferred on *S. Peter*, and intayled on his Successors. The one, wherein it seems to be promised; the other, wherein they say it was actually bestowed.

The first is that famous place, the *Achilles* of the *Roman Cause*. *Matth. 16. 17, 18. Thou art Peter and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* These words which they think so plain and obvious, do yet contain two *Metaphors* of a *Rock* and the *Keys*; and I cannot find in any other part of Scripture that they are explained in the *Romanists* sence, *Simply* and without a *Metaphor*. I am sure they were not so easie to the Apostles themselves, nor did they understand thereby any principality intended for *S. Peter*; as appears by sundry contentions among them, after these words were spoken, who should be the Chiefest.

Nor can the Antient Fathers, Good men, discover any such Energy or Prerogative in them for *S. Peter*, or the Pope. For our Saviour doth not plainly and literally affirm that he will build his Church upon *S. Peter*, but upon the *Rock* which he confest'd: *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ Πέτρᾳ*, upon this *Rock*: not *ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ Πέτρῳ*, upon this *Peter*. *Non dictum est illi, Tu es Petra, sed Tu*

et Petrus: Petra autem erat Christus. It was not said to him, Thou art the Rock, but Thou art Peter: for the Rock was Christ: says *S. Augustin, Retract. l. c. 21.* The same Father in his 124 *Traict. on S. Job. & Ser. 13. de Ver. Dom.* thus paraphrases this Text: *Upon this Rock which thou hast confessed; upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledg'd, (saying, Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God) will I build my Church:* that is, upon my self, the Son of the Living God will I build my Church: I will build Thee upon Me, not Me upon Thee. For the Rock was Christ, whereon Peter himself was built. I am punctual in citing this Great Doctor and Father of the Church, because the Romanists give out that they desire to stand to the alone Judgment of this Learned Father.

The Holy Martyr *S. Cyprian* could not apprehend any such Intrigue in these words. *l. de Unit. Eccles.* The rest of the Apostles, saith he, were the same that Peter was, being endowed with an equal share both of Honour and Power.

Nor *S. Ambrose, Sermon. 66.* *S. Peter and Paul* were eminent among the Apostles, and it is doubtful which is to be preferred before the other.

S. Hillary, l. 6. de Trin. S. Chrysost. hom. 55. in Matth. Euseb. Emisen. Greg. the Great. V. Beda. Haymo, the Gloss of Gratian, Lyra, and a multitude of others, understand the Text of *S. Matthew*, as *S. Augustin* doth. *Cardinal Cusanus l. 2. c. 13. Concord. Cath.* is very positive, that nothing was here said to *S. Peter*, but what was said to the rest of the Apostles. And the words of *Sixtus Sentensis*, a very Learned Pontifician, *Biblioth. l. 6.* are worth our notice. *We believe and acknowledge with a sure faith, that Christ is the first and Chief Foundation of the Whole Ecclesiastical Edifice: But we also affirm that upon this Foundation there are other Rocks lay'd, namely Peter and the rest of the Apostles, whom John in the Apocalypse names the Twelve Foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem:*

In sum, I find three Interpretations of these words among the Antients: viz. That Christ is the Rock: That the Confession, Faith and Doctrine of Christ is the Rock; and that *S. Peter* himself as an Apostle, is Metonymically a partial Rock. All which meanings agree very well together, but nothing favour the Supremacy that the Romanists desire.

Nor do the Protestants deny *S. Peter* a Primacy of Authority and Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Church as an Apostle: or in respect of his Fellow Apostles a Primacy of Order, Calling, Graces, Gifts, Courage, &c. or that he was a Ministerial Rock. But since the Rock and the Keys signify the same thing, to wit, the power of Binding and Loosing; which *Matth. 18. 18.* is expressly promised to all the Apostles; and the same words, of Binding and Loosing are there used, which were before to *S. Peter*: and after the Resurrection, *John 20. 21.* the same power was amply bestowed on all the Apostles equally, and their Successors: He breathed on his Disciples, saying: *As my Father sent me, even so send I you; Receive you the Holy Ghost, Whose sins you retain they are retained, and whose sins you remit they are remitted;* so that no mans Jurisdiction came from *Peter* to him, but every one had it alike and equally from

our Saviour, who sent him : and since S. Paul assures us *Ephes. 2. 20. That we are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles* (in general) and *Prophets : Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner-stone* : and S. Anselm well comments on S. *Matth. 16. This power was not given alone to Peter, but as Peter answered one for all, so in Peter he gave this Power to all* : This Text will not evince S. Peter to have been Constituted the Universal Monarch of Christs Church : Nor in the whole Series of Divine History do we meet with any Monarch-like Action of his Recorded.

But on the contrary, we read that He was sent as a Messenger by the rest of the Apostles, *Act. 8. 14.* That he gave the Right Hand to S. Paul and *Bar-nabas. Galat. 2. 9.* That he was accused to the other Disciples, pleaded his cause before them, and submitted to their Judgment. *Acts. 11. 1. &c.* And that S. Paul withstood him to his face, finding that he walk'd not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. *Galat. 2. 11, 14.*

Thus far they think this Sovereignty was only promised. In S. *Joh. 21. 17.* where Christ said to Peter, *Feed my sheep* : they teach that this power was absolutely delivered and confirmed.

But neither was this charge so lay'd on S. Peter, that the rest were excluded. For they grant that no more was here Given, than what was Promised, *Matth. 16.* where the Keys are mentioned. Now we have evidently proved that all the Apostles were equal in the power of the Keys ; and that those words concern S. Peter no more than the other Disciples.

In Scripture phrase the word, *Feed*, when it is accommodated to Ecclesiastical Functions, is the same as to *Teach*. They shall *Feed* them with knowledge and understanding, saies the Prophet *Jeremy.* And then we shall find the same Command and Commission given to all the Apostles. *Matth. 28. 19, Go and Teach all Nations, &c.* Besides, since All the Apostles had before been sent as Shepherds to *Feed* the Flock. *Matth. 9. 36. & 10. 6.* and were afterwards furnished with more full Instructions, and Abilities to the same end, *Matth. 28. John 20.* which they executed most diligently and Courageously, as appears by their Acts and Epistles ; no man can reasonably deny but that *pasce Oves, Feed my sheep*, belong'd to them as well as to S. Peter : and they themselves gave the same Duty in Charge to other Pastors. *Act. 20. 28. Take heed to your selves and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to Feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Neither would S. Peter ingross this privilege to himself, but communicated it to others. *1 Pet. 5. 2. Feed the Flock of God that is among you.* S. *Cyprian. de Unit.* Eccles. speaks home. *They are all Pastors, but the Flock is one, which by one consent is fed by all the Apostles.* And S. *Crisostom. 1. 2. de Sacerdotio, Our Saviour at that time intended to teach both Peter and Us, how dear his Church is to him, &c.*

This is a True, Short and Plain Account of S. Peter's Authority ; both what was given him by our Saviour, and what was exercised by himself. But, alas,

alas, this is too scant for his pretended Successour, as we shall now manifest.

And I shall be a little more exact in this *Seasonable Argument*, because that I know many of our *English* Roman Catholicks will not believe that this Vast, Unlimited Power is owned by their Church; but is onely the product of the Flattery of private Doctors, and the Pope's particular Parasites.

I will onely mention how the Usurpings, Innovations and Incroachments of the *Roman* Bishops have been constantly opposed by the Greatest part of Christendom in all Ages.

In the first General Council of *Nice*, he was confined to his own particular District; as the Patriarch of *Alexandria* and others were to theirs. In the first General Councils of *Constantinople* and *Ephesus*, the Provinces of the World were distinguished, and the Patriarchs restrained to their own Circuits; and He of *Constantinople* is by name made Equal to Him of *Rome* in all Ecclesiastical Matters. He of *Rome* had indeed the Chief Honour; but that consisted not in Jurisdiction, but in sitting in the first place, and such like Titles.

The Council of *Chalcedon* confirms the same Decrees, and adds withal, Our Fathers gave the Privileges to the Seat of Elder *Rome*; because that City had the Empire: and the 150 Bishops assembled at the Council of *Constantinople* moved with the same reason, gave the same Privilege to the most Sacred Throne of New *Rome*: thinking it reasonable, that the City which is honoured with the Empire and Senate, should also have Equal Privileges with Elder *Rome*, and in Ecclesiastical Matters be advanced alike with her. Another Council at *Constantinople* Enacted the same. But the Council of *Carthage*, Anno 418. consisting of 217 Bishops, is most Worthy of our Remark.

In this Council, when *Sozimus* Bishop of *Rome* claimed a Right to receive Appeals from all parts of the World, and pretended a Canon of the *Nicene* Council that should give it him: the Bishops strongly debated the Matter, and having searched the Original Copies of the *Nicene* Council, whereby the Untruth of his Claim was discovered, they wrote sharply to him, not to meddle any more with their Provinces, nor admit into his Fellowship such as they had Excommunicated. Telling him he had nothing to do in their Causes, either to bring them to *Rome*, or to send Legats to hear them at home: and that this pretence of his was expressly against the *Nicene* Council.

The Evidence of this Great Testimony stands to this day unanswerable by the *Roman* Party. It is abundantly known how Pope *Stephen* was sleighted by *S. Cyprian*; and *Victor* by the Bishops of the East. But this is an Infinite Theme, and I must not forget my promised Brevity.

I shall onely Request the Gentlemen of the *Roman-Catholick* Persuasion, seriously to lay to heart what Trivial Grounds this Grand Article of their Church, the Pope's Supremacy, even in Ecclesiastical Affairs, is founded upon; and to consider how many Difficulties must be cleared to make it a *probable Tale*. 1. That *S. Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*. 2. That he dyed at *Rome* by the special Command of Christ. 3. That he dyed Invested with such a

Supremacy, as is now Exercised in that Church. 4. That his so dying there is sufficient (without a new Revelation from God) to make the Succession of the Bishop of Rome of Divine Authority.

We shall now take a View of that *Grand Machine* of the Pope's power over Temporal Princes, and make it most evident, that it is an Article and Doctrine of the *Roman Church*; and being so, that this alone were a sufficient Motive to forsake her Communion, since She Teaches, Justifies and strictly Commands (even under the penalty of being accounted no Christians) Treason and Rebellion. The present Lord Bishop of *Lincoln* hath written a Learned and Satisfactory Treatise on this Subject, and I find his Lordship very faithful in his Citations. Wherefore I may be the more sparing.

However, because I heartily desire, that Honoured, Pious and Loyal Persons may not unwarily ingage their Liberties, Estates and Lives for the Maintainance of so Extravagant and Tyrannical a Power, which hath in all Ages caused so many dismal Tragedies in the Christian World, and is in it self Fatal and Destructive to all Civil Government, I shall briefly treat of this Matter, to undeceive others: especially since I was herein miserably seduced my self, till I had Maturely and Exactly Examined the whole Business.

I shall begin with General Councils, whose Decrees if they will not admit, I confess I as yet understand not what the Doctrine of the *Roman Church* is, nor do I know where to find it.

The Third Council of *Lateran*, c. 27. after it had Condemned and Excommunicated many Hereticks, (and you must know that All Protestants are both accounted so, and as such, are once every year solemnly accursed by His Holyness in Person on *Maundy Thursday*:) It Absolves All that had sworn Fidelity or Homage to them, from those Oaths (*and we know who they are, to whom Fidelity and Homage, strictly speaking, is due.*) and they are required in Order to the Remission of their Sins, to fight against them. And those who dye doing Penance in that manner, may undoubtedly expect Indulgence for their Sins, with Eternal Rewards. Then by the Authority of *S. Peter and Paul*, the Council remits to all who shall rise and fight against them, two years penance.

Here a General Council uses all its Industry to poison people with Rebelious Doctrine, and calls Treason, *Doing of Penance*. Not long after, Pope *Celestin*, Predecessor to *Innocent the Third*, with more than *Luciferian* Arrogance, sets the Crown on the Head of the Emperour *Henry the 6th* with his two feet, and then kicks it off again. And the fact is produced by no meaner a Person than Cardinal *Baronius*, to shew that it is in the Pope's power to Give and Take away Empires. But to as much purpose as He produced that Text, *Rise Peter, Kill and Eat*; to incense *Paul the 5th* against the *Venetians*.

The second Evidence shall be the Fourth Great, and, as they call it, Most General Council of *Lateran*, wherein were assembled 1200 of one sort or other. These, C. 3. make a Decree, 'That the Aid of Secular Princes should be,

be required for the Rooting out of Hereticks (i. e. *All that are not of the Roman Communion*) and that when the Temporal Lord, required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge his Territory from Heretical Wickedness, He shall be Excommunicated by the Metropolitan and his Suffragans. And if he persist in neglecting to give satisfaction for the space of a year, let him be signified to the Pope, that he from thenceforth may pronounce his Subjects discharged from their Obedience, and expose his Territory to be seized on by Catholicks, who having exterminated the Hereticks, shall possess it without Contradiction, and preserve it in the Purity of the Faith. So as no Injury be done to the Right of the Supreme Lord, where there is such; provided He do not any ways oppose himself. And the Law is to take place in them who have no Superiour Lord.—Which Last Clause perfectly comprehends Sovereign Princes, and so anticipates that Reply which some make, That the Decree was only made for Feudatory and Subordinate Princes.

And whereas some few deny it to be a General Council, and that it made any Canons; it is a most Impudent Cavil. For both the Council and Canons have been and are Universally received by the Roman Church: the Council as General, and Approved so by *Innocent the III.* and the Canons as Authentick. All their Writers concerning Councils put this down among the General ones, and commonly call it the *Great General Council of Lateran*: and *Joverius* says, he cannot see with what face a Man dare deny it. They always put it among those Councils that are Approved by the Church: for you must know that some are Reprobated, some are partly Approbated and partly Reprobated. Their Canon Law so esteems of it. The Council of *Constance* puts it among those General Councils, to the Observation whereof the Popes were to swear at their Installment. The Council of *Trent*, which I hope none will boggle at, *Seff. 24. C. 5.* in express terms calls it a *General Council*, and Confirms one of its Canons. To which I may add, because it concerns us, a Synod at *Oxford*, where this Council was received for *England*. And though some Princes that were deposed out of the Pope's meer Spite and Malice, got some Advocates to write for them, and Synods of Bishops to Protest against the Pope's Proceedings: yet in the case of *Pretended Heresie*, (which neerly touches Protestant Princes) not one Writer or Bishop appears in Vindication of the Temporal Power. A shrewd Sign, that this Deposing Heretical Magistrates, is in General the Romish Doctrine.

The General Council of *Lions* is next. It was summoned by *Innocent the 4th.* against the Emperour *Frederick the 2d.* Here the Pope having consulted with the Council, Declares the Emperour deprived by God of his Dominions: and thereupon they *Actually Depose him*, and *Absolve All* from their Oaths of Fidelity to him: strictly charging All persons to acknowledge him no more for Emperour, and denouncing All that did otherwise, Excommunicated *Ipso facto*. So we have another whole General Council concurring with the Pope.

Pope in asserting this *Deposing Power*, and with Candles burning in their hands, thundering out Sentence against the poor Emperour.

In the Council of *Constance*, *Sess.* 19. we often meet with this Clause, 'That All Breakers of their Privileges, whether Emperours, Kings, or any other Degree, were thereby *Ipsò facto* subjected to the Banns, Punishments and Censures in the Council of *Lateran*; and *Sess.* 17. in the Pass they gave to the King of *Aragon*, they decree, That whatsoever Person, either King, Cardinal, &c. hinder him in his Journey, he is *Ipsò facto* deprived of all Honour, Dignity, Office or Benefice, whether Ecclesiastical or Secular.

It is true, with much Importunity and Danger, *Gerson* procured a Decree in this Council, that No Subject should Murder his Prince. But that Practice was only condemned in such as did it, *without waiting the Sentence of any Judge whatsoever*. So that if Sentence be past by the Spiritual Judge, notwithstanding this Decree, a Prince may be Assassinated. But there is a further Mystery in it. For a King once declared to be no more such, *i. e.* being Deposed, He then becomes a Rebel and an Usurper, according to their Principles, and then it is lawful to kill him.

The Council of *Siena* confirms all the former Decrees made against Hereticks; and the Favourers of Heretic are declared liable to all Pains and Censures of Hereticks; and consequently to the Greatest of them, *viz.* Deposition.

The Council at *Basil* ratifies the Decree of *Constance*, By which, Emperours and Kings, that presumed to hinder any from coming to the Council, are subjected to Excommunication, Interdicts, and other Punishments Spiritual and Temporal.

Finally, the Council of *Trent*, though the world was then much changed, and they durst not trample on Crowned Heads as formerly, yet they would still be nibbling at this sweet Morfel, as near as they could, and still endeavour'd, though covertly, to continue the Claim to this *Deposing Authority*. For in the Decree against Duels, *Sess.* 25. c. 19. they declare, *If any Emperours and Kings, &c. did assign a field for a Combate, they did thereby lose their Right to that place, and the City, Castle, or other places about it.*

If Councils then, as surely they are, be fit deliverers of the Churches sense, we have here no less than seven General Councils to prove this to be the Church's Doctrine. For my own part, I can see no ways they can extricate themselves, but either by Confessing their Church hath erred, or by obstinately going on in a most wretched Justification of such Damnable Tenents and Practices.

There is nothing more to do in this business, but by way of surplussage to give a General Touch at these following particulars.

By the *Book of the Sacred Ceremonies* (which is Authentick and of great Esteem with the Church of *Rome*) the Emperour as soon as he sees the Pope, must bare-headed, bow, till his knee touch the Ground, and worship the Pope: coming nearer he must bow again, and when he comes to the Pope
he

he must bow a third Time, and devoutly kiss the Pope's Toe. The same book informs us that the Pope never gives any Reverence to any Mortal, either by rising up, or uncovering or bowing his head. That the Emperour must hold the Pope's stirrup till he gets on horseback and then lead the Horse for some paces. And some mean spirited Emperors have *de facto* performed these slavish offices.

The Emperour must swear *Faalty* to the Pope, and be his *Hector* to maintain all his Rights and Honours. That horrid *Extravagant of Boniface. VIII.* makes it absolutely necessary to Salvation; that all Christians be subject to the Pope; who hath both the *Swords*, and Judgeth all Men, and is Judged of None. And the Gloss upon that Extravagant dares to say our Saviour had not done discreetly, unless he had left such a Vicar behind him.

Brevius an approved and applauded Author in that Communion, tells us the Pope is Monarch of All Christians, Supreme over All Mortals, there lyes no Appeal from him, He is the great Arbitrator of the World.

Isidorus Moscosus, Vicar General to the Arch-Bishop of Bononia, and a great Lawyer, terms the Pope the Universal Judge, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and saies that God's Tribunal and the Pope's are one and the same, that they have the same Consistory, and therefore all other powers are his Subjects, that the Pope is judged of none but God, not of the Emperour, Kings, Clergy or Laity.

Pope *Innocent* the Third, *Extra. de Major.* gives this description of the Papal power, that it is as much greater than the Imperial, as the Sun is than the Moon. And the Gloss saies that is 47 times greater: but the note in the Margin puts 57 times: nay there is an Author that adds 7744 times. This Decretal of *Innocent* the III. and the forecited Extravagant of *Boniface VIII.* are both put into the body of the Canon Law.

It would be endless to enumerate the *Romish* Authors that defend this prodigious power of deposing Kings. *Bellarmin, Suarez, Sa. Mariana*, maintain and prove this Doctrine. Nor do I know one Jesuit that teaches the contrary. And it is very well worth our notice what an odd kind of answer Mr. *Fisher* gave to King *James*, who demanded of him what he thought Subjects ought to do in the case of the Pope's deposing a Prince? The *Jesuit* gives this sly return: I will pray for Peace and Tranquillity between both Parties; I will exhort all to do good offices conducing thereto, and will rather dye than any wayes be accessory to your Majestie's death. And no more could be got from him but this *Compliment*. But else where he told the King more plainly, that he disclaimed any singular opinion of his own, or more than the Definitions of Councils and Consent of Divines did force him to hold. And what those are, we have pretty well discovered.

The Canonists, Casuists and Schoolmen are Generally, if not *Universally* of this opinion, some teach that it is evident to all, that Emperors are to be Deprievd and Deposed by the Pope, not onely for things pertaining to Faith, but

but for Manners. Others, that the Secular Power is subject to the Spiritual, and that it is no Usurpation, if the Spiritual judge the Secular: and that the Pope hath Supreme Power over Christian Kings and Princes and may Correct, Depose and put others in their places: that he may deprive a King of Royal Dignity for Heresie, Schisme or any intolerable Crime, Negligence or Lazyness; if in great matters he break his Oath, or oppress the Church, and severall other Cafes: and that the Pope himself is sole Judge both of the Crime and of the Condemnation. And *Bzovius de Pontifice, Rom. c. 46. p. 611.* gives us a Catalogue of above 30 Kings and Princes who have *de facto* been Deposed, or by Anathema's damn'd by the Pope. They count them Martyrs that dye for the maintaining this Power; which cannot be unless they Esteem it an Article of Faith. And we have a late Instance of *F. Paul Magdalen*, alias *Henry Heath*, a Learned and in his way Pious, *Franciscan*, who was put to death by the Long Parliament about the year 1643. Who just before his Execution being desired to give his Judgment of the Oath of *Allegiance* (which chiefly concerns our present purpose) declared it absolutely unlawful, and that he would as soon lay down his Life for the Refusal of it, as for any Article of the Roman Belief.

Eman. Sa is not ashamed to publish that if a Clergy Man rebell against his King it is no Treason, because Clergy men are not the Kings Subjects: *Aphorism. Confess. verbo Clericus*. Others, (though I will not say this is so generally taught) that Faith is not to be kept with *Hereticks*. And if my Memory fail not, the Famous *Navar* hath written a whole Tract in Defence of Equivocation and Mental Reservation, and takes upon him the Defence of the Noble Society of *Jesús*, as he calls them, for Universally teaching it: and to my knowledge practising it.

It were very Easy to collect these Corollaries out of the Canon Law, and the Decretal of *Boniface* the VIII. That Emperors and Kings are the Popes Subjects; that they may be Deposed for Heresie and any great Sin: that the Pope hath power over the whole World in Spirituals and Temporals, and that he hath this Temporal power in a more worthy, Superior and perfect manner than Temporal Princes: that Statutes made by Lay Men do not bind the Clergy: that it is necessary to Salvation to be subject to the Pope, and he who affirms the contrary is no Christian; without any hope or possibility of Salvation. *A most Pious and Charitable Rhapsody of Canonical Theology!*

Now you must understand that this Canon Law is approved, received and obeyed in that Church, as The Rule of Justice in All their Courts and Consistories. In this we further learn, that the Holy Church by her frequent Authority, absolves Subjects from their Oaths to Superiors; and it exemplifies in Pope *Zachary*, who deposed the King of *France*, not so much for his Iniquity as for his Unprofitableness. And Cardinal *Turrecremata* in his Comment on this Canon proves that Subjects, if they have the Popes Consent may Depose their Kings.

The Bulls of many Popes against the Princes both of our own and other Nations, are too well known, and may at any time be seen in the *Roman Bullary*.

To draw to a Conclusion in this Odious Matter. Our Country Man *Creswell* the Jesuite in his *Philopater. sect. 2.* asserts, That it is the Opinion of *All* Catholicks, that Subjects are bound to Depose an Heretical King: that they are obliged by the Law of God, by the most strict bonds of Conscience and utmost peril of their Souls to do this. *Bellarmine de Rom. Pontif. l. 5. c. 7.* assures us, it is the Consent of *All* Roman Catholicks, that Heretical Princes, *May* and *Ought* to be Deprived of their Dominions. And the *English* Cardinal *Allen*, speaking how *S. Thomas* defended this Position, and how Cardinal *Tolet* expounds him, adds these words of his own (in his Answer to the Book of *English Justice*) Thus doth this Notable School-man write: Neither do we know any *Catholic* Divine of any Age to say the contrary.

If now, the Testimonies of their Own most eminent Writers, their established Laws and Canons, their Authentick Papal Bulls and Decretal Constitutions, the Decrees and Canons of their own General Councils (the confess'd Representatives of their whole Church) seconded by Actual Deposing of Emperours, &c. be not undeniable Evidence that this Seditious, Desperate and Pernicious Doctrine, is the Doctrine of the *Roman* Church; I must humbly crave Pardon for my Ignorance in their Faith, and must so far disown my self from ever having Embraced, that I never understood their Doctrine, and consequently never was a *Roman* Catholick.

But how Repugnant are these Positions to the Doctrine and Example of our Humble, Meek *Jesus* and his Apostles? Learn of me for I am Meek and Lowly. The Son of man came not to be Ministred to, but to Minister. My Kingdom is not of this World. Man, who made me a Judge or Divider over you? *Luk. 12. 14.* If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, &c. Render to *Cesar* the things that are *Cesar's*. And He himself paid Tribute to *Cesar*, and made *S. Peter* do so too. He submitted to the Power and Jurisdiction of *Pilate*, who was *Cesar's* Deputy. And this not *quia deerant Vires*, because he wanted power to resist (as *Beilarmine* fondly asserts of the Primitive Christians:) for He could have called for more than 12 Legions of Angels. Nay so far was He from granting the *Two Swords*, so much boasted of, to *S. Peter*, that he severely checks him for making Use of *one*. And the Two Princes of the Apostles, as they are styled, *S. Peter* and *Paul*, were perfectly of their Master's temper in this point. The former would not permit a Common Centurion to fall down at his feet, *Act. 10. 25.* and his Doctrine was far different from his Successors at *Rome*, 1 *Pet. 2. 13.* Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the King, as Supreme. &c. Fear God, Honour the King. *S. Paul* preaches the very same. *Rom. 13. 1. 8cc.* Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers, &c. For he bears not the Sword in vain. Wherefore you must needs be subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake. And in matter of Jurisdiction he expressly Appeals to the Judgment Seat of *Ne* the Emperour.

And till the Mystery of Iniquity had gained Head, the *Roman* Popes themselves

spoke in a different Dialect from what they now use. We were in hopes, says Pope Leo, Ep. 44. to the Emperour *Marcianus*, that your Clemency would have condescended so far as to have deferred the Council; but since You resolve it should be kept, I have sent thither *Paschasine*. Pope Stephen speaks thus to another Emperour, Harth not the Roman Church sent her Legats to the Council when you Commanded it? We offer these things to your Piety, says Pope Hadrian to the Emperour *Basilus*, with all Humility, & *veluti presentes Genibus Adulni*, as if we were present before you on our Knees.

Having thus as briefly as the matter would permit, dispatched what was chiefly in my Design of penning this Discourse, and what had the greatest Influence on the satisfying my own mind, I shall make much shorter work with what follows.

General Councils, when truly so, are highly venerated by Protestants, and the Four first, so much honoured by *S. Gregory the Great*, are better observ'd by the Church of *England*, than by that of *Rome*. Nor are we so severe as *S. Gregory Nazian*, Ep. 42, *ad Procop*. Who professes he had never seen any good or Happy Issue of any of them: but look'd on them as the Increase rather than Remedy of the Church's Evils, which Censure is certainly true of those Conventions which have been for diverse Ages last past. No, we desire nothing more than a Free, General Council to conclude differences in Religion: and are most ready to submit to the Determinations of it, and yield the same Authority to it, which the Antient Church in the days of *Constantine the Great*, *Theodosius*, &c. and which *S. Augustine* did.

And that we may not be slandered as being our own Judges, We only desire it may be Qualified according to Cardinal *Cusanus* his Doctrine, *Concord. Cath.* l. 2. Where he declares that a Compleat General Council consists of All the Patriarchs and Principal Governours of the Universal Church. That a Council kept by the Roman Bishop, and those only who are subject to him, excluding others, is but a particular Council. That a General Council may be celebrated, though the Pope refuse to concur by his Presence, and Consent. That All that meet in Councils, ought to have free Liberty, orderly to declare and Determin Matters in question. That whatever must oblige as Divine, ought to be confirmed by the Authority of Holy Scripture. That no Councils are Legitimate, where private Respects are managed, under pretext of Faith and Religion. That the Roman Bishop hath not that power, which many flatterers attribute to him: viz. That he alone is to Determine, and Others only to Consult and Advise. That a General Council is Superiour to the rest of the Patriarchs, and also to the Roman Bishop. That a General Council may be deficient, and that *de facto* Councils lawfully assembled have erred.

And since they have failed, and have contradicted one another; as appears in the Second Council of *Nice*, and that of *Constance* among many others; the one Decreeing the Worship of Images, the other prohibiting Communion in both Kinds; against the exprels words of Scripture; the Councils of *Lateran* in Deposing Kings: the Council of *Frankfort* opposit to that of *Nice* in the Business

of Images: the Council of Florence against those of Basil and Constance, in the point of the Pope's Superiority over a Council; It is certain that Councils are to be Regulated and Examined by God's Word, and to be Received or Rejected as Conformable to, or Disagreeing from that. And for this we have the Authority of the Great S. *Augustin*, *contra Maxim. Arian.* l. 3. c. 14. *Nec ego Nicenum, &c.* Neither ought I to produce the *Nicen*, nor Thou the *Ariminum* Council, as having already prejudged or absolutely Determined the Cause, beyond all Appeal. For I am not bound up by the Authority of this, nor Thou by the Decree of that; but let us regard the Authority of the Holy Scripture; witnesses not partial or appropriated to either party, but common to both. A speech worthy the Gravity, Learning, and Piety of S. *Augustin*.

As for the Councils of the Later Centuries, they neither have been General, nor hath either their *Assembling* or *Proceeding* been Lawful; and they have most Industriously thwarted the Canons of the most Pure and Antient Councils.

Their Assembling hath not been Legal, in that the Modern Popes have Usurped the whole Right and Authority of Convocating Councils contrary to the Primitive Custom and Practice of the Church. The first *Nicene* Council was called by *Constantine* the Great; the first *Constantinopolitan*, which is the second General Council, by *Theodosius*; that of *Ephesus*, by *Theodosius* Junior; that of *Chalcedon*, by *Martianus*; the fifth, by *Justinian*; &c. All which are such evident Proofs, that the Cardinals, *Cusanus*, *Jacobatus*, and *Zabarella* confess, that in the first Ages of the Church, the Right of Calling Councils belonged to the Emperour.

Nor are Their Proceedings any better. For the Popes admit no Assessours or Judges in Councils, but their own Faction, Men beforehand enslaved by a Solemn Oath (which all Bishops of that Communion take at their Consecration) to maintain the *Regalia Petri*, all the Usurpations of that See. The Pope is the only Authentick Judge in All matters, Approving and Refusing whatever He pleases.

Their own Histories afford us Examples enough to confirm this. I shall instance but in the Sleights and Wiles of the Late so much cried up *Trent-Council*. Wherein, to make sure work, on the Pope's side there were more Italian Bishops than of all the World beside. And most ridiculously to dazzle the eyes of the People, some of these subscribe themselves Eastern Patriarchs, as of *Jerusalem*, &c. and Others as if they were Greek Prelates. Some had the Titles of Archbishops, who had neither Church nor Diocess; as *Upsalensis* and *Armachanus*, who were Created on purpose to fill up the Number. And when the Pope on a certain Occasion wanted Voices to sway the cause, He sent a fresh supply of 40 Bishops newly made. And this was part of that Leigerdmain, which an Eminent French Bishop, *Claud. Espenc.* one of those vvhho sat in the Council, calls *the Great Helena which of late Ruled All at Trent.* in *Ep. ad Tit. c. 1.*

All the Oriental and Greek Patriarchs and Bishops were Excluded: None out of England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden; few out of France and Spain; fewer out of Germany it self, were admitted. When the Protestants required,

Audience, they could not be hearken'd to, upon any tolerable terms. It was long before they could get a Safe-Conduct; and when it was procured, it was clogg'd with this Clause, *That it should belong to none, but such as would Repent and Return to the Bosom of the Roman Church.* This Partiality and Jugling when the Princes of Europe saw, they sent their Protestations against the Council, as being Insufficient to Reform Religion.

In Trying and Deciding Controversies, they adhered more to Tradition than Scripture: and pass'd nothing till the Pope with his Consistory had seen it at home, and approved it; and then he transmitted it to his Legats. So that, as One said, the Holy Ghost was continually posted in Cloakbags between *Rome* and *Trent*. (Though, by the way, their own Doctors teach that the Assistance of the Holy Ghost is a personal Privilege and cannot be Delegated.) While the Divines were formally Disputing at *Trent*, the Pope was as busie in Ingrossing Canons at *Rome*, and sending them to the Council to be published. Thus they proceeded, sometimes by a wrong Rule, sometimes by none at all. In the 4th Session they Decree, That none should give any other Exposition of Scripture, than such as might agree with the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*. And yet this very Doctrine was the Thing questioned, and the Scriptures were to have been the Touchstone to try it by.

Take this whole Affair in the Words of *Andreas Dudithius*, a Bishop in the Roman Church, and an Eminent Member of this Council. He thus writes in an Epistle to the Emperour *Maximilian* the 2d, What good could be done in that Council, where voices were taken by Number, and not by Weight? The Pope was able to set an 100 of his against every one of ours; and if an 100 were not sufficient, he could on a sudden have created a thousand to succour those that were ready to faint. We might every day see hungry and needy Bishops, and those for the most part Beardless Youngsters, come in Flocks to *Trent*, hired to give their Voice according to the Pope's humour: unlearned indeed and foolish, but of good Use to him for their Audaciousness and Impudency. The Holy Ghost had nothing to do with that Conventicle. All things were carried by Humane Policy, which was wholly employed in Maintaining the Immoderate, and indeed most Shameless Lordship and Domineering of the Pope. From thence were Answers waited for, as from the Oracles of *Delphos* or *Dodona*. From thence the Holy Ghost, who, as they brag, was President of their Council, was sent shut up in Carriers Budgets, who (a thing worthy to be laugh'd at) when the Waters were up, as it falls out many times, was fain to stay till they were down again, before he could repair to the Council. By this means it came to pass, that the Spirit was not carried on the Waters, as in *Genesis*, but along besides the Waters, &c.

Nothing is more talk'd of than the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*: and this I know to be a most tempting Bait to get Profelytes; especially amidst those Many Dissentions in the Christian World at this Day. But because this Pretext hath been utterly destroyed by the Lord *Falkland*, Mr. *Chillingworth*, and other most Learned Pens, I will only Recommend this Single Consideration to All Judicious Roman Catholicks, who would not be choiced out of their Wits, Estates and

and Liberties by a Gang of Ecclesiastical Mountebanks, viz. That this Huge, Swelling Prerogative of Infallibility is so Senseless a Thing, so Ungrounded, that no Romanist according to his own Principles, can have so much as a probable Moral Assurance of that wherein he thinks himself Infallible. And unless every one in particular be Infallible, it is to little purpose to boast of an Infallible Judge. For a Man may as well mistake the Meaning of his Sentence, as the Sentence of one who proceeds only upon prudent Moral Assurance: and we see that thousands do erre in the Interpretation of those acknowledged Infallible Oracles, the Holy Scriptures.

The Consideration I recommend is this. That after All the Stirr that is made about Infallibility, the Learnedest amongst them knows not where to meet with it; nor in what cases it is annexed to that Chair, in what it forsakes it. Some, as the Jesuits generally, will have it in the Pope: but then whether with his Cardinals, or by Himself is controverted very briskly. Others will have it in a General Council: and this Opinion is backt by no less Authority than the Councils of *Basle* and *Constance*. But then the Church hath been very long without it, and possibly may never enjoy it by means of a General Council to the End of the World. That wherein they fix it with most plausibility, is both the Pope and a Council together. But even here we are at a great many losses. For as to the Pope, no man can be assured of his being a true Pope; considering the various defects that may render him otherwise; as a fundamental Error in his Election, Simoniack Induction, the female Sex, Want of true Baptism and Holy Orders, both which depend upon the Intention and Validity of those, from whom he receives them; and theirs upon the like Qualifications in their Predecessors, &c. Occult Heresie and Many others. And then as to a Council, which consists chiefly of Bishops (tho the Popes, for some ends best known to themselves have now pack'd in Cardinals, Abbots, Generals of Orders, &c.) besides that, the Validity of a Council depends upon the uncertainty of the Pope's being truly Qualified; the very same Difficulties occur in every particular Member, as did in respect of the Pope himself. The like uncertainty appears in every Sacrament administred in that Church, some whereof are absolutely necessary, both *Necessitate Medii & Præcepti*. v. g. in Baptism, Absolution, Consecration of the Host, which if it be not duly performed, Idolatry is committed by the People in adoring it, even by their own Concessions. *Azorius* the Jesuit, *Enchirid.* c. 8. openly proclaims, That it is a more tolerable Error in them who worship Golden and Silver Statues, as the Gentiles did their Gods; nay, a piece of red Cloth on the top of a Spear, as the Laplanders are reported to do, than in those who adore a piece of Bread.

And now I would fain know of a Lay-Roman-Catholick, what is become of his Infallibility, where it is, and to what purpose it serves him? No where is it to be found, as I know of, but in the bold Assertion of every pragmatical Confessor, Who bids you be sure to look to your Faith; (who are the Solifidians now?) to believe as the Church believes, and then all is safe; for the breach of the Ten Commandments, there are Merits and Indulgences enough in the Church, which being mixt with a little Attrition and Confession will do the work...

work, Though in the mean while He himself can neither tell where this Infal-
lible Church is, nor what she certainly believes.

Methinks S. Paul spoke as much like a *Prophet* as an *Apostle* : as if he foresaw
the Haughtiness of the Members of that Church to which he wrote. And there-
fore to curb them and banish from their Minds all such vain conceits of Infalli-
bility, he tells the Church of *Rome* she stood on no firmer grounds than her Neigh-
bours. His words are these, worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance by
All Roman-Catholicks. *Rom. 11. 18, 19, Boast not against the Branches, &c. Well :*
because of unbelief they were broken off ; and Thou standest by Faith. Be not high-
 minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also
spare not Thee. Behold therefore the Goodness and Severity of God : on them which
fell, Severity, but towards Thee, Goodness ; if Thou continue in his Goodness : other-
wise Thou also shalt be cut off. Which words need rather your Practice than my
Paraphrase.

How much Safer and more Satisfactory is it to rely on the Holy Scriptures
themselves ; which by all Sides are acknowledged Infalible ? For as much as
they were divinely Inspired by that great Infalible Truth, which neither can be
deceived, nor deceive his Creatures ; which can make you wise enough to Salva-
tion, and who hath promised to every humble Petitioner, and devout Practiser,
a sufficient Competency of Knowledge, in what is necessary for his present Con-
dition and Eternal Happiness.

Now all this you will find abundantly provided for in the Doctrine and Con-
stitutions of the Church of *England*.

Here is the Word of God faithfully Translated, and exactly, as far as the I-
diomes of Languages will permit, compared with the Originals : and All those
Books received, of whose Authority there was never any doubt made in the
Church. Some others called *Apocryphal*, are read indeed ; but as *Ruffinus* in *Exposit.*
Symbols, speaks, *non ad Fidem firmandam sed ad Mores Instruendos* : Not for
confirming Faith, but for direction of Manners. And they are excluded from
the Canon upon very weighty Reasons. For that they were never committed
as of Divine Authority to the *Jews* : to whom the Oracles of God were intrusted,
Rom. 3. 2. Nor are they to be found in the Hebrew Canon. They are never found
cited by Christ or his Apostles : and in some places they contain things manifestly
false, contradictory both to themselves & the other Genuine Prophetical Writers.

You have here the three Creeds, the Apostles, that of the *Nicene* Council, and
that of S. *Athanasius* : together with the four first General Councils, which
represent to us the Sincere Scheme of Apostolical, Primitive Doctrine and Di-
cipline.

You have here good works Recommended, Preach'd and Practiced, as the
Fruits of Faith and Evidences of our Justification : and though not as Ex-
piatory for our Sins, yet as in Obedience to the Divine commands, and as a Sa-
crifice acceptable to God. And even in this Degenerate Age of Christianity it
might be made to appear, that as many Acts and Monuments of Real Charity
have been exhibited since the Reformation, as were in many Ages before. But
for

for those Works of *Suprerogation*, as they are called, whereby we are presumed to perform more than is our Duty, this Church worthily disowns them, as favouring of too much Pride and self Conceitedness in us, who at the best are but unprofitable Servants.

You have here a just and Competent Authority allowed to the Church, of appointing Decent Rites and Ceremonies, and of determining Controversies in Religion: provided she decide nothing Repugnant to the Holy Scripture. And the *Apostles* themselves challenged no more, Witness *S. Paul*: *Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ*.

You have here a *Lawful Call* to and *Succession* in the Ministerial Function (and this Succession, if need were, may be shewn to be more *Sincere* and less *Interrupted* than that in the *Roman Church*.) As likewise those *Three* most Antient degrees of *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*: and the manner of their *Ordination* most conformable to God's Word and Primitive Constitutions and Practice.

You have here all the Divine Services and Administration of the Sacraments, performed in the known Vulgar Tongue of the Country, to the Edification of the People, and according to Divine Precept. On which Subject *S. Paul* hath written a whole Chapter, *1 Cor. 14.* no ways reconcilable to the Practice of the *Roman Church*: which herein is confessed to disagree with Antiquity, by the most Learned of our Adversaries, and many of them wish that the Custom were abolished. Nor doth their *Common Plea* avail, that God understands any Language: for many parts of their Service are addressed to the People, and not to God: as the Instructions out of the Epistles and Gospels, *Orate Fratres*, &c. and many Occurrences in the Administration of the Sacraments.

Here you will find the *two great Sacraments* of the New Law, *Baptism* and the *Sacred Eucharist*. The first never so much as questioned by our Adversaries as to its Validity. And the other Administred in the due Matter and Form of Divine Institution; and that *intirely*, without committing that *Grand Sacrilege* of taking away the Cup from the Layity. And if the Church of England Embrace all that is *Really* conveyed to us in those High Mysteries, *viz.* The Application of those Ineffable Benefits and Advantages of the *Sacred Body* and *Blood* of Christ; it is as much as every Good Christian can desire, and enough, if duly received, to make him Happy.

And as for that Wonderful Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, we have the *Romanists* own Acknowledgment, that it was not believed in that Church till the Council of *Lateran*; which likewise *Decreed the Deposing of Kings*: and I am sure the Church of England hath *Scripture*, *Antiquity*, *Reason*, and the concurring Testimony of *all our Senses*, when she acknowledges a *Real Presence* to the True Believer, without *Annihilating the Substance* of the Elements.

I am sure our Blessed Saviour at the Institution calls the whole Action a *Commemoration*: and in the Consecration of the Cup he most apparently uses a double Figure; both in the *Cup*, used for what is in it, and the *Testament*, for what is conveyed by it. He himself calls it the *Fruit of the Vine*. And *S. Paul*, *1 Cor. 11. 26, 27, 28.* in 3 verses together expressly calls it *Bread* even after the Consecration,

secreations; Whoever shall eat this Bread, &c. As often as ye eat this Bread, &c. Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of this Bread.

And whereas our Saviour saies *This is my Body*: to omit the multitude of Authorities that might be produced, let the great *S. Augustin* speak the sense of All Antiquity: *Christ* did not stick to say *This is my Body*, when he gave the *Sign of his Body*, in *Psalm* 98. and *de Doctrin. Christiana*. l. 3 c. 10. he lays down this notable Rule; If you find a Commandment that forbids a Crime, or enjoins any good Action, then its sense is not Figurative: but it is otherwise when it seems to command a Crime and prohibit a good Action. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you, saies *Christ*. That word seems to command a Crime: it is therefore a *Figure*; which bids us Communicate in the passion of our Lord, and call into our Memories with sweetness and benefit, that his Flesh hath been wounded and nailed on the Cross for us.

Thus doth *S. Augustin* teach. And indeed nothing is more frequent in Holy Writ, than such manner of Speech: *This is the Lord's Passover. I am the true Vine*, &c. But to examine this business fully, would require a just Volume, and it is already done by very able Pens.

The 5 other Sacraments in use in the *Roman Church*, are solemnly used by the Church of *England*, though not under that notion: excepting the Ceremony of *Anointing*, which was a Miraculous gift of Healing peculiar to the *Apostles*.

In the Church of *England* you may enjoy the true use and Advantage of *Confession* and *Absolution*, in a far more serious and less suspicious manner than in the *Roman Church*. And as for *Absolution*, even the Form of it is as full and Compleat as theirs. I will set it down here, as it is found in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick.——Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who hath left power to his Church, to Absolve all Sinners, who truly Repent and Believe in him, of his Great Mercy forgive thee thy offences: And by his Authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy Sins; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Her Churches are decently kept and adorned, (at least it is her desire they should be so) though not crowded with *Images*: the Historical use of which she rejects not: but the Adoration of them she worthily esteems most Dangerous and Detestable. And truly for my own part, I think that Dr. *Stillingfleet*, now the Reverend Dean of *S. Pauls*, hath little less than Demonstrated it to be Idolatry. Let any but impartially examin the general practice of the Church of *Rome*, especially on *Good-Friday* in creeping to the Cross: and he will find an undeniable proof of their *Adoring Images*. The Priest by degrees uncovers the Crucifix, lifts it up to be Adored with these words, *Ecce Lignum Crucis*, &c. Behold the Wood of the Cross, come let us Adore it. Then first he himself, then all that are present, with three Prostrations of the Body, even to the Kissing of the very Earth, approach to it, and with all Reverence Imaginable Adore it.

The Worship and Invocation of Saints and Angels, is here looked upon as at least very Dangerous, and not having any President in the Old or New Testament. *S. Paul* hath imparted his mind to us in this matter, *Coloss.* 2. 18. Let no

man beguile you of your reward; in voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen.

The Doctrines of Merit, Indulgences, Purgatory, &c. are presumptuous at best, and full of Abuses, contrived more for the Priests profit than the Penitents comfort. All which considered, together with the small grounds for the belief of them, they are worthily disowned by the Church of England. Nor was Bellarmine, when out of the heat of School Disputes, of a Different Judgment, *l. 5. de Justif. c. 7. Propter incertitudinem, &c.* By reason of the Uncertainty of our own Justice and the Danger of Vain Glory; *Tutissimum est, &c.* It is the safest course to repose all our Confidence in the alone Mercy and Benignity of God.

In short, you will find that the Church of England in her Reformation, which was most Regular, and by the Supreme Authority of the Whole Nation, retains all the *Essentials* of Christianity, and onely Rectified such things as She found, and the whole World complained, were some Ridiculous, some Impious; Others Sensual and Cruel.

Such are the Innumerable Crossings, Repetitions of Names, Kissings of the Pax and Images, Offering up of Incense and Candles, Impertinent Pilgrimages, &c. and a Thousand the like absurdities.

Such as teach men to put their Confidence in Bless'd Beads and Medals, Counterfeit Relicks, Confraternities, Sodalties; to trust to *Mundayes* Prayers for the Dead, and our Ladies Litanies: and Ascribe to pieces of Wax called *Agnus Dei's*, Divine power and Efficacy, even as much as is due only to the *Precious Blood of the Son of God*. Nor is this the belief and practice onely of a few Old Wives; but the *Ausbeck Book of the Sacred Ceremonies of the Roman Church*, tells us how *Urban V.* sent three *Agnus Dei's* to the *Greek Emperor*, with most Blasphemous Rythmes annexed concerning their Virtue. Amongst others this is *Verbatim* set down, — *Peccatum frangit ut Christi sanguis et angit* — that it Destroys Sin as the Blood of Christ doth.

And this was not the Practice of one Phantastical Pope alone, but according to the fore said Book, *l. 1.* Every Pope in blessing these *Agnus Dei's* uses this Prayer. 'That it would please thee, O God, to bless these things, which we purpose to pour into this Vessel of Water prepared for thy Name: so as by the Worship and Honour of them, we thy Servants may have our heinous offences done away, the blemishes of our Sins wiped off, and thereby we may obtain pardon, &c.

No Meaner a Person than the Angelical Doctor *S. Thomas Aquinas*, attributes the same Virtue of taking away Venial Sins, to *Holy Water*. And likewise *3. qu. 25. a. 3.* in *c.* most Orthodoxly defends, That Stocks and Stones, I mean Images, are to be worshipped with *Latria*, the same Honour that is due to the Creator. *Suarez* and *Vasquez* teach the same.

To Conclude this Discourse. In the Church of England You will meet with all that is Good and Warrantable in the Church of Rome; what ever is Necessary to Salvation: and that by the Confession of the Learnedest Romans. Let Bellar-

min speak for all. *l. 4. de Verbo Dei. c. 11.* 'The Apostles themselves never used
' to Preach openly to the people (much less propounded as Articles of Faith)
' other things than the Articles of the Apostles Creed; the Ten Commandments,
' and some few of the Sacraments: because, saies he, These are simply Necessary
' and Profitable for All Men: the Rest besides are *Such, as that a Man may be*
' *Saved without them.*

This made *Antonius de Dominis*, Archbishop of *Spalatto*, even at his Return to
Rome, to acknowledg the *English Church* to be a *True Apostolical Church*. And
Father *Fulgentio* the *Venetian*, Companion to Father *Paul*, the Famous Compiler
of the History of the Council of *Trent*, had a most High value and Tender Re-
spect for this Church, as having in it all the Requisites for Faith, Manners and
Discipline. And that Incomparable Man, *Hugo Grotius*, had so Venerable an Af-
fection for her, above all other Reformed Churches, that he told our Ambassador
in *France*, That he Intended after his Return from *Swedenland*, whither he was de-
signed Ambassador from the *States General*, to transport himself with his whole
Family hither, on purpose to dye in the Bosome of the *English Church*. In such
Repute is She even with Foreigners.

And to speak one word to the *Roman Catholicks* of *England* even in their
own Language. By their own Concessions, the Church of *England* is safer to
Communicate with than that of *Rome*.

For, To Believe onely what is in the Scripture, is as much as is necessary, as
Bellarmin Confesses. To worship God without an Image, is acknowledged by all
both safe and acceptable. To pray immediately to God, and use the Lord's
Prayer, without Repeating so many *Ave Maria's*; to perform the best works
we can, and not stand on the point of Merit, &c. and so of the other matters in
Controversie, is by both Sides granted secure: Whereas the other Things in de-
bate, are strongly disputed by very Learned and Pious Men. Now what would a
Man require more than what all acknowledge to be in the Church of *England*:
viz. Means effectually conducing and sufficient to Believe Well, to Pray Well,
to Live Well, and to Dye Well.

It remains onely, that the Truly Devout and Loyal Persons in our Nation
that are of the *Roman Persuasion*, will but vouchsafe to take the Courage and Pains
following Our Blessed Saviour's Advice, *John 5. 39. Search the Scriptures*; and
S. Paul's, 1 Thess. 5. 21. Prove all things, 2 Cor. 13. 5. And examine your selves
whether you be in the Faith.

A POST-

A POST-SCRIPT

To the *Roman* Catholicks of my Acquaintance.

Ever Honoured and still Respected Friends,

HAVING thus fairly and ingenuously unbofomed to you the very thoughts of my Heart, I beseech You not to take with the *Left Hand* what I offer with the *Right*. Many of You I know to be Truly Vertuous, Noble and Loyal: to Many I have most Endearing Obligations; and I think none can contradict me if I affirm, That my Converse among You was repay'd with Love and Esteem: and I take Heaven and Earth to witness, that I still value you as tenderly as I do my own Soul. God onely knowes how many Throes and Strugglings I had to part with those, whom I so Earnestly affected. But Truth (at least as it seems to me) is Great, and will prevail. My Request to You All is, That You would not let us break in point of Charity, though our Opinions are not altogether Coincident: That You would, for the removing any scruples that may arise, believe me, as I shall answer at the Last Tribunal, That I was not onely *Sincere* but *Zealous*, while I remained among You: and that whatever I performed, was with the perfect *Intention* of, and Compliance with the *Roman Church*; and as Validly done as any Actions of that nature are capable of admitting. Lastly, I desire for God's, Religion's, and Your own sake, that we may refrain from All Contumelious Reflexions on one another.

In that Long Converse and Great Familiarity I had with you, it is impossible, but Failings and Imperfections must be discovered on both sides. Let All be concealed Under the Mantle of that Charity, which hides a multitude of Sins: still think of me as you ever found, One that *sought not Tours, but You*: an honest, plain down-right meaning Person. And as for my present Proceedings Leave me to stand or fall to that Great Judge, to whose, and his Church's Censure, I with the most profound Obedience Submit, whatever I Write or Do.

And Once more I recommend to your most impartial and serious Consideration this Important Quæry: Whether it be not Sufficient Ground to withdraw from the Communion of a Church, when She is convinced publicly to *Teach, Practise* and *Command Treason* and *Rebellion* to its Members? *Sicut Reputari cupiunt & Haberi Fideles*, (as the *Lateran Council* Thunders it out) as they desire to be Accounted and Treated as Christians.

As to the Traiterous and Monstrous Plot now in Question; What Mr. *Oats* and Mr. *Bedlow*, with the rest of the Informers Evidences are, I know not, nor am I much Inquisitive. His Sacred Majesty, and his Great Council are Judges of that. But of this I am as sure as I can be of any humane Transaction, That the *Roman Church Teaches* and *Commands* such Practices; That they have been frequently put

put in Execution abroad and especially at Home. And that consequently such Doctrines, Mr. Colman's by his own Confession, and Letters, which he did not deny, was very Busie in attempting to Dissolve the Parliament, and in procuring Assistance from the French King, by the interposition of Monsieur le Guesle the Jesuit, who was this King's Confessor. (To use his own words.) 'To Carry on the Mighty Work in their hands, no less than the Conversion of Three Kingdoms, and the Utter Subduing of a Pestilential Heresy, which hath Domin'd over a great part of this Northern World a long time; and that there never was such hopes of success since the days of their Q. Mary, as now in These days, And I am sure, that a most *Warby Justice of Peace* was Barbarously Murder'd, who took the Examinations upon that occasion; and that many other Insolent Actions were committed by that Party. Nor can it be any Satisfaction to the Nation for well-minded Persons to say they *Disclaim* and *Deny* such Actions; unless they *Renounce* the Principles, and *Disown* the Authority which have promoted and still are ready to prompt men to such Desperate Practices. God Almighty grant Us All his Grace to Consider in This Our Day the Things that Belong to Our Peace, before they be Hid from Our Eyes. Amen.

FINIS

As to the Traitors and Monarchs Plot now in Question: What Mr. O. and Mr. B. say, with the rest of the Informers Evidence, as I know not nor can I reach Indifference. His Sacred Majesty and his Great Council are Judges of that. But of this I am as sure as I can be of any humane Transgression, that the Roman Church, Jesuits and Commanders (such Traitors; that they have been frequently